

ECHOES OF THE CIVIL WAR

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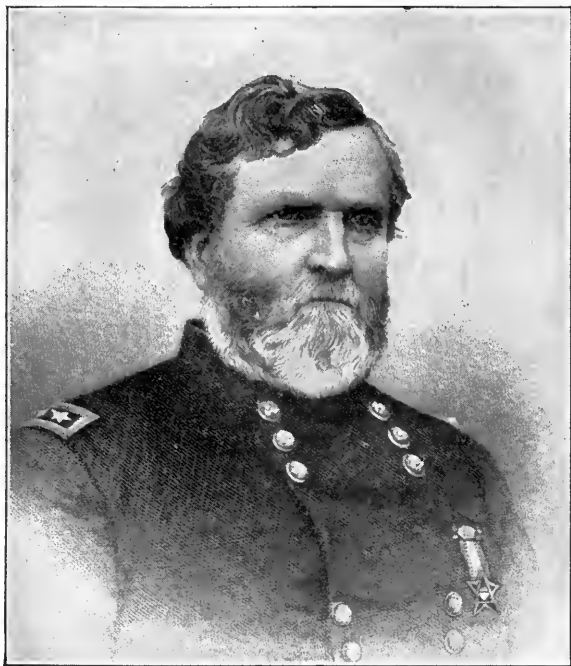
Henry A. Dubbs Eng-
with high regards
W.H. Webb

June 19, 1905.





ECHOES OF THE CIVIL WAR



General Geo. H. Thomas.

—*Frontispiece.*

ECHOES OF THE CIVIL WAR AS I HEAR THEM

BY

MICHAEL H. FITCH

BREVET COLONEL OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE CIVIL WAR



NEW YORK

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By MICHAEL H. FITCH

*I dedicate this volume to the
memory of those soldiers, living
or dead, of the Twenty-first
Wisconsin Infantry, who did
the effective service at the front.*

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Echoes of the Civil War

CHAPTER I THE RECORD

Epitome of Author's service in Sixth and Twenty-first Wisconsin Volunteers—Certain omissions made—Some differences between War Department record and State record—Service was continuous from May 10, 1861 to June 17, 1865—Industrial pursuits more important than military services—The necessity for maintaining a military and naval establishment, even in a republican government—The justification of volunteer service in the Civil War.

ONE day several years ago, an ex-officer of volunteers in the Civil War laid upon my desk a slip containing the following memoranda, viz. :—

“ Entered service as sergeant-major Sixth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, July 16, 1861 ; commissioned first lieutenant Company D, October 23, 1861 ; appointed adjutant, April 14, 1862 ; left state for Washington, D. C., July 28, 1861 ; at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, until August 3d, thence moved towards Washington and camped on Meridian Hill ; attached to King's brigade, division of the Potomac, August to October, 1861 ; King's brigade, McDowell's division, Army of the Potomac to March, 1862 ; first brigade, King's third division, McDowell's first army corps, Army of Potomac to April ; third brigade, King's division, department Rappahannock

to June; fourth brigade, first division, third corps, Army of Virginia, to July, 1862.

SERVICE

“Duty in defense of Washington, D. C., until March, 1862; advance on Manassas, Virginia, March 10th to 15th; advance on Falmouth, April 9th to 19th; Falmouth, April 23d; McDowell's advance on Richmond, May 25th to 29th; operation against Jackson, June 1st to 21st; at Falmouth until July; resigned July 17, 1862.

“Appointed and commissioned adjutant Twenty-first Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, July 18, 1862; promoted major of regiment, December 19, 1862, and lieutenant-colonel, November 1, 1864, to date from March 24, 1864; brevetted colonel, United States volunteers, March 13, 1865, for gallant and meritorious services during the war.

“Regiment organized at Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and mustered into service, September 5, 1862; ordered to Cincinnati, Ohio, September 11th, thence to Covington and Louisville, Kentucky.

“Attached to twenty-eighth brigade, third division, Army of the Ohio, September, 1862; twenty-eighth brigade, third division, first corps, Army of Ohio to November; third brigade, first division, centre Army of Cumberland to January, 1863; second brigade, first division, fourteenth corps to October, 1863; third brigade, first division, fourteenth corps to May, 1864; first brigade, first division, fourteenth corps to June, 1865.

SERVICE

“Pursuit of Bragg to Crab Orchard, Kentucky, October 1 to 15, 1862; battle of Perryville, October 8th; guard duty at Mitchelville until December 7th, and duty at Nashville, Tennessee until December 26th; action at Jefferson, December 30th; battle of Stone River, December 31, 1862, and January 1 to 3, 1863; duty at Murfreesboro until June; detached from regiment and duty as inspector, first division, fourteenth corps, April, 1863, to February, 1864; Tullahoma campaign, June 24 to 30, 1863; Hoover's Gap, 25th to 26th; occupation of Tullahoma, July 1st; Elk River, July 3d; Chattanooga campaign, August to November; action at Dug Gap, Georgia, September 11th; Crawfish Springs, September 18th; battle of Chickamauga, September 19th to 20th; Rossville Gap, September 21st; siege of Chattanooga, September 24th to November 23d; battles of Chattanooga, November 23d to 25th; Lookout Mountain, November 23d to 24th; Mission Ridge, November 25th; Ringold, Georgia, November 27th; reconnaissance of Dalton, Georgia, February 22 to 23, 1864; Rocky Face Ridge, February 23d to 25th; Buzzard Roost, February 25th to 27th; Atlanta campaign, May to September; Tunnell Hill, May 7th; Rocky Face Ridge, May 8th to 11th; Dalton, May 12th; battle of Resacca, May 13th to 15th; Kingston, May 19th; battles about Dallas, Pumpkin Vine Creek, and Alatoona Hills, May 25th to June 4th; New Hope Church, May 29th and 30th; operation against Kenesaw Mountain, June 9th to July 2d; Pine Mountain, June 14th; Lost Mountain, June 15th to 17th; Big Shanty, June 17th; Pine Knob, June

19th; assault on Kenesaw, June 27th; Nichajack Creek, July 4th; Vinings Station, July 5th; Chattahoochee River, July 6th to 17th; Peach Tree Creek, July 19th and 20th; Siege of Atlanta, July 22d to August 25th; Utoy Creek, August 5th to 7th; flank movement on Jonesboro, August 25th to 30th; battle of Jonesboro, August 31st to September 1st; Lovejoy Station, September 2d to 6th; pursuit of Hood into Alabama, October 1st to 26th; March to the Sea, November 15th to December 10th; Milledgeville, November 23d and 24th; Montieth Swamp, December 7th to 9th; siege of Savannah, December 10th to 21st; campaign of the Carolinas, January to April, 1865; Fayetteville, North Carolina, March 11th; Averysboro, March 16th; battle of Bentonville, March 19th to 21st; occupation of Goldsboro, March 24th, and of Raleigh, April 13th; Bennett's House, April 26th; surrender of Johnston; march to Washington, D. C., by the way of Richmond, Virginia, April 29th to May 17th; Grand Review, May 24th; mustered out, June 8, 1865."

I read it over carefully and asked him where he obtained his data. He answered, "In the War Department at Washington, D. C. That is your official record of service in the Civil War." I was somewhat surprised, although I knew in a general way that some record of service of every officer and soldier had been kept; yet my service had made so little impression on my own mind that when confronted with so minute a description of it, I was not only astonished but elated that it seemed to read well.

The following omissions had been made in the record,

viz.: "Commanded his regiment on the Atlanta campaign from July 1, 1864, and on the march to the sea. Through the Carolinas, he commanded one wing of the first brigade, first division, fourteenth army corps, consisting of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, Forty-second Indiana, and One Hundred-and-fourth Illinois. He commanded these three regiments in the battle of Bentonville. Assigned March 28, 1865, to the command of second brigade, first division, fourteenth army corps."

I was glad enough to enlist very early in 1861, and was equally glad when the war ended in the triumph of the Union arms, to be honorably discharged. For a great many years after the war, I paid little attention to it. The subsequent publication of the "Official Records of the Rebellion," by act of Congress, however, greatly stimulated my interest in the details. The above personal record commences with the muster into the United States service as sergeant-major, on July 16, 1861. But I had enlisted at Prescott, Wisconsin, in April, and was mustered into the state service with the Prescott Guards as related hereafter from May 10, 1861. The United States muster-in rolls show the latter as the date of enlistment, and I drew pay from that date. My service was continuous until June 17, 1865, the date of final payment at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Our discharges had been made out and dated at Washington, D. C., June 8th. The record, however, shows that I was discharged from the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry on July 17, 1862, but this was for the purpose of enabling me to accept a commission as first lieutenant and adjutant of the

Twenty-first Wisconsin Infantry. The latter commission is dated July 18, 1862, and I went directly from the Sixth Wisconsin, then in camp at Fredericksburg, Virginia, to Madison, Wisconsin, received the commission from the hands of the Governor and reported at once at the headquarters of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, then at Fon du Lac. It was very soon moved to Oshkosh.

This military service in the volunteer army from May 10, 1861, to June 17, 1865, during a very active war of great magnitude, was an exceedingly important episode in my life, as it was in the life of every one who served in that war. Its details cannot be forgotten by me. The pages of this book tell in a desultory way some of these experiences and some observations that occur to me as derivable therefrom, yet I do not for a moment delude myself with the idea that this epoch was the most important in my life. It was not. Nor do I claim that my services were of special importance to my country. There were younger men who made much more of a record, yet my services make now sufficient impression on my mind to think that my descendants may take some pride in such service. Hence this book.

I strongly believe that the pursuits of peaceful industry are far preferable to those of war, and the achievements of civil life are invariably of more lasting importance to the individual and also to one's country. I believe in the old Anglo-Saxon preference for the peaceful cultivation of the soil, and industrialism in general, as opposed to militarism. When the Anglo-Saxons in Old England were conquered by

the Normans, they wisely let their conquerors do the governing and fighting, and stuck to their farms, paying the taxes required of them. In time they thus conquered the Normans. Their descendants to-day possess England. The descendants of these same Anglo-Saxons in the United States, when the southern people, the most of whom were the descendants of those same Normans, threatened the integrity of the Union, rose en masse in 1861, and persevered in pure awkwardness, until by force of numbers and at the last with some acquired skill, succeeded in conquering peace. When the necessity for war ended, still believing with their forefathers that industrial pursuits, not war, were the true instruments by which nations are built, they quietly dropped the uniform and accoutrements of war, and took up again their plows, hammers and planes.

As long, however, as nations will go to war, it is necessary for this government to maintain a certain disciplined force, both in the army and the navy. But only so far as it is necessary to defend the people in their peaceful homes and pursuits, not for conquest and acquisition. New territory should be acquired by contract only entered into freely by the interested parties.

Nothing in the history of governments was ever more praiseworthy or imperative than the military defense of the integrity of the Union by the volunteer army in the Civil War. The instincts of the northern people were right when they laid aside for the time being, all other matters and gave four years of valuable time, and

three hundred and fifty thousand lives to preserve union and liberty. I am glad that I took an humble part therein, and therefore cherish some pride in the record of that service.

CHAPTER II

COMPANY B, SIXTH WISCONSIN INFANTRY

A company of volunteers raised in the sparsely settled region contiguous to Prescott, Pierce County, Wisconsin—The manner in which it was done—The patriotism of the pioneer settlers—The personnel of the company—Sworn into the State service, June 10, 1861, by Major B. J. Sweet—The departure, June 28th, for the rendezvous, Madison, Wisconsin—It becomes Company B, Sixth Wisconsin Infantry—Its first service in Milwaukee at the Bank Riot—The Author, July 3d, made Sergeant-Major—The subsequent career of the company briefly given.

THE region in northwestern Wisconsin, bounded on the west and northwest by the Mississippi and the St. Croix rivers, and contiguous thereto, in 1861 was sparsely settled. There was no railroad. Transportation was made either by steamboat on the water or by horses on the land. These factors made the raising of a volunteer company for service, an arduous task. When Mr. Lincoln made the first call for seventy-five thousand volunteers, the quota of Wisconsin was one regiment. At least, only one regiment of three months' men left the state under that call. That regiment, I believe, was largely made up of militia companies that had been previously organized and equipped. Yet active recruiting commenced at once all over the state in the latter part of April, 1861. I presume every company that was recruited in any part of the state at that time, made effort to get into that three months' regiment. The sentiment

then was quite universal that three months would close the war. Hence, whoever failed to become a part of the first regiment would see no service and receive no military glory.

A mass meeting was held at once in our town, Prescott, Pierce County. Several addresses were made. Patriotism was effervescent, and thirty young men signed the roll of the Prescott Guards. We at once notified the Governor that we would like to be a part of the troops about to be called. But at that time, as we were informed, enough companies had been offered to fill four regiments. As only one regiment was called for three months, our little squad out on the northwestern border had very little show. This did not discourage this little patriotic band. They began drilling every day, studied the tactics, erected a liberty pole mounted by a bayonet, pointing south, with the stars and stripes floating from its top. The fiery spirit of '76, as we understood it, was thoroughly aroused. By April 30th, a full company was enlisted. Daniel J. Dill, a prominent merchant who had military tastes and who afterwards became captain of the company, went up the river to Hastings, Minnesota, and down the river to various towns, in pursuit of recruits. Rollin P. Converse and myself took a pair of horses and a buggy and started into the back country. That ride across the prairie and through the woods for several days, was novel and exceedingly interesting. We visited, not only the towns, but every farm. At one town, I think River Falls, we met recruiting officers from Hudson, the county seat of the adjoining county of St. Croix, on the same errand. We held a joint meeting at night at which

several addresses were made. We found western pioneer hospitality everywhere. Every rugged backwoodsman, whether American, German or Norwegian, was full of patriotism. Indignation at the firing on Fort Sumter was genuine and universal. The roads, especially through the woods, were in a wretched condition. It rained, and the mud was frightful. One evening in a lonely spot in the primeval forest, a singletree of the buggy broke. But there stood, by the side of the road, a sturdy pioneer with an axe on his shoulder. In five minutes he had cut a hickory withe, twisted it into a pliable rope, tied it around the broken tree in the most skilful manner, and sent us on our way rejoicing, with a buggy stronger than it was before. Wherever we stopped over night the host would refuse pay for our entertainment. The mother and daughters would look after our comfort, even drying our apparel when wet with rain. Everywhere we were bidden Godspeed in our patriotic efforts. How many recruits we procured on this trip, I have now forgotten. But some walked to Prescott for miles to enlist. The muster rolls of the company show that almost every township in Pierce County was represented among its members. There were no better soldiers in the army than many of these backwoods farmer boys. A number of them never returned. We had some enlistments from far up the St. Croix River among the lumbermen and loggers. Captain Dill was successful in getting recruits from Hastings, Menominee and other towns. A. C. Ellis, a bright-eyed boy with curly black hair brought quite a number from Menominee. Before the first of May, between

ninety and one hundred had taken the oath of service and allegiance to the United States. I administered the oath to each one who signed the enlistment. D. J. Dill was elected captain. Two alleged Mexican war veterans were made lieutenants. I was appointed first sergeant. The Governor was notified that we were ready for service. But, not only the first, but the second, third, fourth and fifth regiments of volunteer infantry were organized at Madison without our company being assigned. There was great uncertainty for some time after this about being called into service. The men went back to their homes, and some of them enlisted in other companies. We thought the rebellion would be over before our chance would come. However, by May 10th, we were informed that we were the sixth company in the sixth regiment.

I see by letters written at this time that military service had the same attractions for me that it always has for the average young man. I was full of enthusiasm and hyperbolic patriotism. But the whole people were in the same condition. May 12th, the steamboat, *Northern Belle*, went down with a large party of ladies and gentlemen who had been visiting the first Minnesota regiment at Fort Snelling, where it was quartered. Flags were streaming and the band was playing "America." On that afternoon, those of our company who resided at Prescott, drilled all the afternoon, using sporting rifles and shotguns for muskets. That day also, we received news of a conflict at St. Louis. "How gladly would all the companies in the northwest march for some active field!" I wrote on that same day.

On May 26th, I wrote, "The general government has required two regiments from this state. It can have a dozen. The death of Colonel Ellsworth touched the heart of every patriot."

On June 10th, the Prescott Guards were sworn into the state service to date from May 10th. The legislature had provided for the mustering into the state service, six regiments, including the one then in the three months' service of the United States. We slipped into the last one. When we received notice that we would be mustered on June 10th, there was scurrying throughout the district to get them together. Converse and I took a buggy and hurried again through the back townships. Captain Dill went in another direction. Telegrams were sent to Hastings and Menominee. When Major B. J. Sweet, the recruiting officer finally came, we could count only sixty-four available men on the rolls. We were required to have eighty-three. The captain was still out recruiting, when at nine o'clock the men had to form in line for inspection and drill. I formed them on the prairie, and lo! there were seventy in line. We marched into a large hall. Major Sweet asked me to act as his clerk. He and I examined each man separately in an adjoining room. It took all day, and then he swore in seventy-five. New recruits were coming in all the time. The major said he must return to Madison the next day, the 11th. At noon, the captain arrived with six more, leaving only two to make the minimum. As Major Sweet stepped on the boat to go, he swore in the eighty-second man, and empowered the captain to swear in the eighty-third when he was found. He was

soon found. They were all sworn for three years or during the war. It took hard and persistent effort to raise this company in a district so sparsely settled.

On June 17th, I wrote on a letter sheet that had at the top a half globe surrounded by waves of water. A flag floated in the breeze from the pole of this globe, and on the globe the capital letters, "Our Country," all printed in green ink. I wonder if there was any significance in the color? It was quite usual in those days to have patriotic emblems all over the envelopes. The different companies of our regiment were called by the Governor to rendezvous at Camp Randall, Madison, under date of June 25th. In the meantime the Prescott Guards were drilling daily on the level prairie adjoining Prescott, on the high banks overlooking the Mississippi. We adopted as a temporary uniform, black pants, red shirts, and gray caps. The girls of Prescott presented us with white "Havelocks." After a few weeks' drill the company presented a very respectable appearance in this uniform. On the 28th of June, the company boarded a steamboat at the Prescott wharf. The whole people of the town were on the wharf to see them off. Amid speech-making and affectionate farewells, they started on a long campaign, many of them never to see their homes again.

Landing at La Crosse and taking cars, they soon reported at Camp Randall, Madison, Wisconsin. They became Company B of the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry, and the left company when the regiment was in line. Company and regimental drill was kept up daily. The state issued them arms and gray uniforms. In a few days after arriving at

Camp Randall, a disturbance occurred in Milwaukee. This was a rising of the German people of the city against the banks on account of some methods adopted by the banks in regard to receiving state bank bills for deposit. It is commonly called the "Bank Riot." The Governor was called on for troops and two companies were sent from Camp Randall. One company was ours and one belonged to the Fifth Wisconsin Infantry, then in the same camp. We remained in Milwaukee two or three days, but fortunately were not required to fire our muskets, although called out suddenly one afternoon. The rioters simply marched through the streets and then faded away. This was the first service of the company.

On July 3, 1861, I was appointed by the colonel of the regiment, sergeant-major. This severed my connection with Company B, and took me to the headquarters of the regiment. The sergeant-major is assistant to the adjutant and the highest warrant officer of a regiment. I had been first sergeant of Company B from its first organization, more than two months before this, and knew every man by name. I knew it to be a splendid body of men. They seemed to return my affection for them, because at the election of officers in Prescott, they came to me in a body, and offered to elect me first lieutenant. I refused for two reasons. First, that Captain Dill had promised that place to another in payment for a certain number of recruits, and I would not antagonize the captain. Second, I was entirely unfamiliar with the drill or military affairs and distrusted my unmartial temperament. The latter reason I soon found not to be

tenable. In time I learned the drill and acquired the habit of command. My connection with this company was my first military service, and that to a young man means very much. I therefore watched its career in the war, and took great pride in its splendid record.

In 1889, Jerome A. Watrous, then editing the *Sunday Telegraph* at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, published in his paper the following :

“Colonel Daniel J. Dill, of Prescott, spent last Sunday in the city. He is the assemblyman from Pierce County. We look back almost twenty-eight years, and see a tall, straight, soldierly looking young man of twenty-nine years, as he marched into Camp Randall, at the head of one hundred strong, manly young men. It became Company B, Sixth Wisconsin. In 1862, the captain was made colonel of the Thirtieth Wisconsin, with which he served three years. Colonel Dill is now about as erect and fine looking as he was twenty-eight years ago, but the gray hairs and whiskers tell the story of passing years. What a glorious company that was. Colonel Dill’s successor in Company B was Rollin P. Converse, who was killed in the Wilderness, May 5, 1864. His successor was W. W. Hutchins, who was killed at Weldon Railroad in August, 1864. Where is Captain Henry E. Smyzer, who succeeded Hutchins? Another member of that glorious company was Arthur C. Ellis, who received a terrible wound at South Mountain. Until a few years ago when he died, Ellis lived at Eau Claire where he was a lawyer of high rank. He had also been county judge. M. H. Fitch was another member of

that company. He became a first lieutenant in the sixth and afterwards lieutenant-colonel and brevet colonel of the twenty-first. He was United States pension agent in this city for a time, but has been a prominent citizen of Pueblo, Colorado, for many years. Charles P. Hyatt—genial, courageous, generous Hyatt! He fought his way to the rank of captain of Company E, and died in 1864. Another lieutenant in Company B was Solomon B. Holman, who won his straps by splendid fighting in thirty different battles and skirmishes. Ex-Lieutenant-Governor S. S. Fifield made two attempts to go to war in this company, but was thrown out by the surgeon. One could write columns about the men of that company and its work."

I wrote to Major Watrous (he is now paymaster in the regular army) at once upon reading his article, as follows: this is the way it appeared in his paper:

"OLD COMPANY B"

Colonel M. H. Fitch feelingly refers to his old company.

"DEAR COLONEL WATROUS:—

"Your late remarks in the *Sunday Telegraph* upon Colonel D. J. Dill and Company B of the Sixth Wisconsin have brought to my mind, memories connected with that glorious old company. General Bragg told me at the reunion in Milwaukee in 1880, that it was the best company of soldiers he ever saw. While I write, there lies before me the first roll ever made of its members. It was made in Prescott, twenty-eight years ago, this spring. It is on a sheet of common legal cap paper, and is yellow with age.

Its caption is, 'Roll of Prescott Guards.' It yet shows the pin holes made opposite the absentees from drills in May, 1861. These drills were held on the prairie adjoining Prescott, overlooking the Mississippi River. I was first sergeant until we reported at Camp Randall when I was appointed sergeant-major of the sixth and was never again connected with the company, although in the same regiment for a year. A. C. Ellis was second sergeant. Philip H. Collins, a Mexican War veteran, was third sergeant, and R. P. Converse, fourth sergeant. W. W. Hutchins was only a corporal and Henry E. Smyzer a private. Ellis and the last three all became fine officers. Colonel Dill speaks in the highest terms of the great qualities of Converse, who died of wounds.

"Major Benjamin J. Sweet came up to Prescott and mustered us into the state service. As an undress uniform, we adopted the gray cap, red shirt and black pants. Oh! the drilling, the marching, and the enthusiasm of those days! Captain Dill was a natural soldier—tall, straight as an arrow and very commanding. The men all respected him, not only for his soldierly qualities, but for his kindness, even temper, and most excellent judgment. The first and second lieutenants were both said to have been in the Mexican War, and knew something about the drill. There were no stupid brains amongst the men. Is it any wonder, then, that before July 16, 1861, the date of muster into United States service, this company became so mobile and well drilled? Their subsequent career and record proved that they were also heroes in war.

"The company left the state with ninety-two members.

Of this number, fifty-two were killed and wounded. Thirteen became commissioned officers—three colonels and lieutenant-colonels, and five captains. Some were transferred to the navy, others to the artillery, several promoted into other regiments, while from time to time, new recruits were enlisted until in 1865, when I visited the company for the last time, I recognized but three or four of the men whose names are on this old roll. It would be interesting to know how many of the original men were mustered out with their company at the close of the war and I venture to guess, not a dozen.

“As I read over the names of this old roll each individual face is as plain to me as it was then. I wish that instead of the names being in alphabetical order they were written as the men stood in line from Seymour W. Colby the tall, on the right, to Tommy Davis, the short, on the left. Then, when I held up the roll, my imagination would see them in perfect form, shoulder to shoulder, the equal in soldierly qualities as they were, of the same number, anywhere on the globe.”

Company B, Sixth Wisconsin volunteers lost fifty-two killed and wounded out of ninety-two originally mustered into the United States service. Of these, twenty-seven, or more than half were either killed outright or died in a short time of their wounds. This is not the largest company loss, even in the Sixth Wisconsin, but is far above the average and more than perhaps any one of a thousand regiments lost during the war. It had four different captains. One was made colonel of the Thirtieth Wisconsin, two were killed in battle. The last captain, Henry E. Smyzer, who was a

private when the regiment was mustered in, was mustered out with his company, July 14, 1865. It had five different first lieutenants. Five privates were transferred early to Battery B, fourth United States Artillery, Gibbons' old battery. Eight deserted. The latter were outclassed. The pace was too fast for them; the fighting was too fierce for these and the remarks I make in eulogy of the company will always exclude these eight unfortunates. A few were transferred to the navy, and after several battles had been fought some of the wounded to the invalid corps, some to the veteran reserve corps, and others discharged from time to time for wounds or disability. Several did not veteranize, but were discharged at the end of their three years' term, July 16, 1864. Two of them became quartermasters of the regiment, and two acting adjutants.

There was perhaps not a rich man amongst the ninety-two. The most of them were poor in this world's goods. They were generally small farmers, lumbermen, loggers, clerks. Many of them had no permanent abiding-place. They were not members of churches; nor particularly distinguished for morality. Had they remained in civil life, it is not at all probable that one in ten would have distinguished himself in any way, and would have gone down to his grave, "unknelled, unhonored and unsung." But the result proved that in unselfish patriotism, and true bravery they were more than rich. Refined in the terrific fire of battle, they became immortal on the brightest pages of their country's history. Cicero says that next to love of God comes love of country.

CHAPTER III

THE SIXTH WISCONSIN INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS

The Author's service in the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry as Sergeant Major and First Lieutenant—The difficulty of making a mere automaton of the American volunteer—The Fifth and Sixth in Camp Randall at the same time—Mustered into the United States service, July 16, 1861, and left the State for the Potomac, July 28th—Arrived in Washington, D. C., August 8th—The Sixth became a part of the famous "Iron Brigade"—Lieutenant-Colonel Kerr referred to—Spent the winter of 1861-2 on Arlington Heights, opposite Washington—The advance on Manassas in March, 1862—Became part of McDowell's army of defense on the Rappahannock—General Gibbons became Brigade commander—Author resigned at Fredericksburg, July 17, 1862, to become Adjutant of the Twenty-first Wisconsin—The fine record in the war of the Sixth and of the Iron Brigade.

It will be seen by the official records that my service with the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry extended from July 16, 1861, to July 17, 1862. But the records of the adjutant-general's office of Wisconsin at Madison includes also the service in Company B from May 10 to July 3, 1861, and the service as sergeant-major from July 3d to July 16th. The service of any volunteer regiment prior to its transfer to the seat of war is one of organization and equipment. It is what is called in European armies, "Mobilization." At Camp Randall, however, it included drilling and all kinds of exercises necessary in eliminating the awkwardness of the

civilian and transforming him into a military automaton. This was perhaps never entirely accomplished in our volunteer army. After everything was done that could be done to make a model soldier of an American volunteer, there was still left a reserve of individuality. The inherited independence characteristic of a sovereign entity, one from whom is derived the smallest modicum, perhaps, of the power that rules in a republic, like ours, could not be entirely eliminated in the soldier of the Civil War. As a rule he was as intelligent as his officers. He knew as much about the school of the soldier and the company drill, and whenever he was promoted to a position requiring it, he was invariably equal to the command of a regiment, a brigade or a division. These facts did not make him less obedient. He was intelligent enough to perceive that success in war requires regimentation. This means that some must command and the others obey. However well read or learned in books the private might have been, if his officer, although not so learned, had the instincts and temperament of a true soldier; was brave and successful in fighting the enemy, he gave such an officer absolute obedience in the proper relation of a private to an officer. But if the officer happened to be the scholar but lacked power to command, and was cowardly, the most illiterate private, if efficient and brave, soon forced such an officer out of the service by the unconscious expression of his silent contempt.

The Fifth and Sixth Wisconsin regiments were encamped in Camp Randall at the same time. The arduous duties of preparation were varied by more or less military display,

such as marching through the streets of Madison on July 4th by platoons. Every evening at dress parade, hundreds of the people would flock to the grounds to witness the display and hear the martial music. There was a large flag pole and a piece of artillery. At reveille, the flag would be hoisted ; at retreat it would be lowered and the piece fired. Guard mounting was strictly adhered to and in every respect all the regulations were correctly taught and enforced. Each company was marched to the mess hall and seated by military commands given by the first sergeant.

We were mustered into the United States service, July 16th by a regular army officer. Each company in succession fully equipped, except arms, marched out of its quarters, was thoroughly inspected and took the oath with uplifted hands, "to bear true allegiance to the United States of America, and to serve them against all their enemies and opposers, whatsoever." Cheer after cheer went up as the boys found they were actually in the service of Uncle Sam. This was the third time this oath had been administered to each member of Company B. Duplicate muster-in rolls were made for each company. These were very elaborate. Each man's record in the government service was determined by these rolls. As I was sergeant-major at the time of muster-in, the war department at Washington has nothing to show that I ever belonged to Company B, except the "remarks" opposite my name on the muster-in roll of the "field and staff."

On the evening of July 22d, we received the news of the defeat at Bull Run, and at the same time an order to report

in Washington, D. C., as soon as possible. Our regiment received its colors from the state, by the hands of Governor Alexander W. Randall, who made a speech. We then passed in review before him. Our state uniform was gray, with a blue shirt. Notwithstanding so much had been done prior to receiving orders to move, yet it took six more days to reduce our baggage and equipments to somewhere near movable bulk, and then after leaving more behind than we tried to carry, we yet moved off immensely overloaded with all kinds of stuff that was of no earthly use to us in the field. We left Madison on the morning of the 28th of July, dined at Milwaukee, and arrived at Chicago the same evening. The streets of both cities were crowded with patriotic people cheering us on. So it was all along the route through Pittsburg to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where we halted for three days. From there we went to Baltimore. There were 1,052 officers and men in the regiment when we were mustered in.

August 4th, I wrote from Baltimore :

“We are encamped in Patterson Park, overlooking the blue waters and shipping of the bay. In the distance is Fort McHenry, the flag over which in a former struggle gave rise to the National Anthem, the ‘Star Spangled Banner.’ In this encampment, the earthworks thrown up in 1814, for the defense of the city are quite well preserved. On this ground the Federal forces were then encamped. In our march through the city at nine o’clock at night, without arms, we could hear occasionally a cheer for Jeff Davis, but we were not otherwise noticed.”

We arrived in Washington and became a part of the Army of the Potomac, August 8, 1861. During the year following, the regiment was being constantly drilled. Although at first, it was armed with old Belgian muskets, eventually it was armed with the best Springfield rifles. But what was better still, its field officers had the nerve and good sense to weed out inefficient line officers as time showed the necessity, and replace them with members of the regiment whom close acquaintance had shown to be worthy. Ten officers were forced to resign at Arlington Heights, opposite Washington, in the latter part of October, 1861. Some of the captains were supplanted by lieutenants, and the places of lieutenants were filled by enlisted men. I remember that some of the loudest captains at Camp Randall, who assumed to "know it all" were the first to go. While the modest ones who had brains, and were anxious to learn, like Bragg of Company E and Dawes of Company K, were the ones who eventually carried the regiment to its culmination of efficiency. Soon after joining the army, Major B. J. Sweet became lieutenant-colonel, and Captain E. S. Bragg was made major. In July, 1862, Colonel Sweet resigned to take the colonelcy of the Twenty-first Wisconsin Infantry. Bragg was then promoted to lieutenant-colonel and Captain Rufus R. Dawes of Company K was made major. In October, 1861, I was commissioned first lieutenant of Company D. For a considerable part of the time, however, from that time until I resigned in July, 1862, I was acting adjutant of the regiment. All the officers of Company D had resigned and their places were not filled by any member of that

company. Yet at that time, Thomas Kerr was a sergeant of Company D. After some fighting had been done by the regiment, Sergeant Kerr was commissioned an officer; subsequently was made lieutenant-colonel and commanded the regiment most efficiently in some of its severest battles. The last time I saw Colonel Kerr in Milwaukee, he showed me three bullets that had been extracted from his body. He was wounded five times.

Upon arriving in Washington, the regiment slept the first night in a church, then moved to the old city hall lot which was then enclosed with a high board fence. The Pension office now occupies a part of this ground. In a few days, however, perhaps the same day, we moved out to Kalorama Heights, and commenced to live an army life. Here General Rufus King organized his brigade, consisting of the Second, Sixth and Seventh Wisconsin and Nineteenth Indiana Infantry, and moved it down to the Maryland side of the Chain bridge, September 2d. Camp Lyon was the name given to it. Here we drew blue uniforms for the first time, about September 21st, and discarded the state gray. We were encamped here over a month, but October 5th, the brigade was moved over into Virginia, and went into winter quarters on Arlington Heights, near the Lee Mansion. It was in camp here all the winter of '61-2. Every day of this period was full of active duty. There were guard mount in the mornings, company drill in the forenoons, regimental drill in the afternoons, and dress parade in the evenings. There were picket duty at the front; brigade and division drills and frequent reviews. In all these it was the duty of

a sergeant-major to take a humble part. General McClellan was in command of the army; General Irwin McDowell of the corps, and General Rufus King of the brigade.

It will be remembered that in March, 1862, McClellan made a general advance on the rebel intrenchments at Manassas, found them abandoned, although imitation wooden guns were left in place; returned to Alexandria and embarked the greater part of his army down the Potomac on steamboats bound for the Peninsula. But General McDowell's corps was held back as a defense of Washington. The line of defense was, however, made on the Rappahannock River. After much marching and counter-marching, camping and waiting, this army of defense arrived at Fredericksburg, in April, 1862. There were on this advance, some of the enemy's cavalry, and detached bands who kept well out of the way. But the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry did not do any fighting. It was receiving, however, the discipline and hardening of an actual campaign, through mud and rain. It was this kind of service during which there was so much opportunity for battalion drill and exercise in all soldierly duties except fighting, that made the regiment afterwards so efficient in actual battle.

This army of McDowell's made a reconnaissance from Fredericksburg occasionally to the front towards Richmond where General McClellan was fighting. When Stonewall Jackson's forces left Lee's army and marched into the Shenandoah Valley, we marched as far west as Warrenton, Virginia, to assist Banks, who was somewhere in there with a small army. Here, also, at Fredericksburg, General Gib-

bons took command of the brigade, General King being promoted to the command of a division. The men had issued to them, shelter tents and white leggings, for the first time. The next morning after the issue, General Gibbons found the legs of his horse ornamented with white leggings. This was a silent protest against these leggings.

In July, 1862, while lying at Fredericksburg, I received the following dispatch from Governor Solomon :

*"State of Wisconsin,
"Executive Office,
"Madison, July 10, 1862.*

"MICHAEL H. FITCH,
"First Lieut., Co. D, 6th Reg., Wis. Vols.

"SIR :

"In raising new regiments in the state, I intend to appoint Lieutenant-Colonel Sweet as colonel of one of them. He desires you as adjutant of his regiment. If you will accept that position, you must come here at once.

"Respectfully yours,

"EDWARD SOLOMON,
"Governor of Wisconsin."

Colonel Bragg and General King endorsed my application for discharge and gave me transportation to Washington via Aquia Creek and the Potomac River. While on the transport going up the river, I read for the first time, Pope's famous order announcing his command of the army of Virginia, composed of all the troops in that department, except those with McClellan on the Peninsula, and saying that his headquarters would be in the saddle. There were a number of officers from different regiments on board and I could see that they did not look upon Pope with favor. General

McClellan still had command of the old Army of the Potomac, and was very slowly moving it from Harrison's Landing on the James. It was in this camp, he wrote those letters to President Lincoln, in which he tried to throw the blame of his failures on the Peninsula on the President and the War Department.

I had no trouble in Washington getting my discharge. It is as follows :

*" Headquarters Army of Virginia,
" Washington, July 17, 1862.*

" SPECIAL ORDER
" No. 15.

" Extract.

" The following named officer, having tendered his resignation, is hereby honorably discharged from the military service of the United States —

" First Lieut. Michael H. Fitch, 6th Wisconsin Volunteers.

" By Command of

" MAJOR-GENERAL POPE.

" (Signed) GEORGE D. RUGGLES,
" Assistant Adjutant-General."

The record of the Sixth Wisconsin in the war was one of exceptional merit. When it came into actual service in the field, it proved to be one of the finest volunteer regiments. It was brigaded soon after its arrival at Washington with three other infantry volunteer regiments equal in efficiency to itself, viz.: The Second and Seventh Wisconsin, and the Nineteenth Indiana. This brigade came afterwards to be known as the "Iron Brigade" and is so called in most histories of the operations of the Army of the Potomac. The sixth is one of the forty-five regiments whose

losses in the Civil War were the largest in killed and mortally wounded in battle. Yet, it was not in the first battle of Bull Run, nor with McClellan on the Peninsula. It did not have any fighting until August 28, 1862, at Gainesville under Pope, the real beginning of the second Battle of Bull Run.

The Sixth Wisconsin during its term of service had four different colonels, and furnished several colonels to other regiments. All four of its colonels were brevetted brigadier-generals, and one major-general. Two of them were made full brigadier-generals. Two of them became members of congress after the war—Bragg and Dawes. It lost in killed and wounded, 867. Of the 1,058 men originally enrolled, 179 were killed—16.9 per cent. It lost sixteen officers killed. It had losses in twenty-two battles.

The "Iron Brigade" stands at the head for brigade losses during the war. Its loss was 1,131 in killed. This is thirty per cent. more than the troops from the states of Rhode Island and Delaware together lost in the Civil War. It is seventy-four per cent. of the whole losses during the Mexican War.

Colonel W. F. Fox in his work, "Regimental Losses," says of the sixth:

"The regiment left Wisconsin July 28, 1861, proceeding to Washington, where it was assigned to the brigade which was destined to fill such a glorious place in the annals of war. The sixth had the advantage of a year's drill and discipline before it was called upon to face the enemy in a general engagement. . . . Under command of Colonel

Dawes, it won merited distinction at Gettysburg in the battle of the first day; all histories of that field, mention the manœuvre and the part taken in it by the sixth, by which a part of a confederate brigade was captured in the railroad cut."

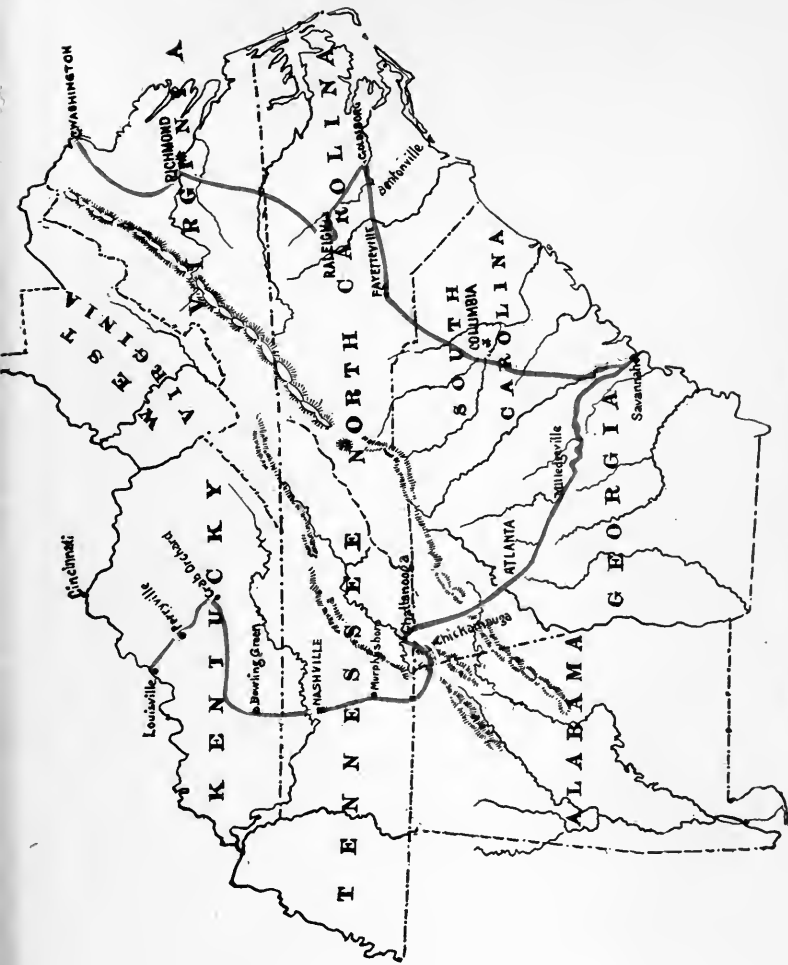
The regiment became finely drilled before I left it. But of course that did not foreshadow its fighting qualities. Its real efficiency depended upon the way it was handled under fire by its officers. Its death list of officers tells the real tale of how the men were held under fire in many battles. It was one of nineteen regiments in the service that lost sixteen or more officers killed or mortally wounded. It is the only Wisconsin regiment that lost as many as sixteen.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION OF THE TWENTY-FIRST WISCONSIN INFANTRY

The year 1862 was the darkest of the war—The President's call for 300,000—The Twenty-first Wisconsin Infantry organized under this call—The call quickly filled—The regiment made up from the northeastern counties of Wisconsin, around Lake Winnebago—The fine appearance of the men—The hard work of organization, and paucity of equipment—The regiment mustered in September 5th, and leave the state September 11, 1862—Roster of officers—Reminiscences of the camp at Oshkosh—Short anticipatory account of subsequent marches and losses.

THE history of the Twenty-first Wisconsin volunteers extends over a period of nearly three years. The summer of 1862 was to me the darkest period of the war. Absolutely no progress that was perceptible to the observer had been made towards peace. When the call for 300,000, under which this regiment was organized, was made in July, 1862, McClellan was fighting valiantly but without success, two enemies on the Potomac,—the rebels and the malaria of the swamps; McDowell's army of the Rappahannock was encamped on the river from which it was named, sixty miles from the city of Richmond. What afterwards became the Army of the Cumberland, was on the Tennessee River, from which in a very short time it had to fall back into Nashville and Kentucky, while after the battle of Shiloh, no particular progress had been made by the Army of the Tennessee.



March of the Twenty-First Wisconsin Infantry.

It was absolutely necessary that something vigorous should be done—that a more aggressive policy should commence, and therefore the President called on the 3d day of July, 1862, for 300,000 more volunteers. Under this call, the twenty-first was raised and organized. This number (300,000) was very quickly raised. No sooner had the call been read by the people, than from hill, valley, town and city, came the announcing shout, “We’re coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 more,” as the popular song words it. Wisconsin filled her quota in an incredibly short space of time. The headquarters of the twenty-first was established at Oshkosh on the first of August, 1862. By the first of September—one month after—there had been offered towards filling up its ranks, more than eighteen hundred men. Of course, all these could not be received into that regiment, but on the fifth of September there were mustered into the service of the Government, nine hundred and ninety-six of as good, true, splendid-looking men, as ever shouldered a musket. They came from the counties of Fond du Lac, Winnebago, Outagamie, Manitowoc, Calumet, Waupaca, and one company, H, was made up largely of railroad men, enlisted along the line of the Northwestern railway. Physically, these men as a body, were almost unequaled. Their tall forms and generally fine appearance, attracted attention wherever they went. When the regiment was first reported in person for duty to the officer commanding at Covington, Kentucky—Major-General Lew Wallace—his remark was, “Colonel, you have a splendid-looking set of men,” preceding this remark with a very emphatic expletive. While

it was marching through Cincinnati, General Sam Cary, the temperance lecturer, and whilom member of Congress remarked to its adjutant, that it was the finest-looking regiment he had seen. After the regiment had been in service for a short time, one foggy morning it was passing other troops when one of them exclaimed, "Are there any more liberty poles left in Wisconsin?" The fog may have somewhat magnified the forms, but these incidents serve to show how the appearance of the regiment impressed those who saw it. It was well adapted to the old service of grenadiers or heavy infantry—rather where force was required, than celerity. The average moral tone of this regiment was first-class. Rowdiness in all its various forms was scarcely known. Their intelligence was much above the average. In short, any judge of human nature, to look into their faces would say that all such men wanted, to make first-class soldiers, were drill and discipline, and this proved to be true. The companies came rapidly into camp in the days about the first of September and were immediately quartered in barracks built in the fair grounds, named Camp Bragg, after General E. S. Bragg of the Sixth Wisconsin. On the fifth of September, they were mustered into the United States service, receiving one month's pay, and each man twenty-five dollars, an advance on the one hundred dollars bounty, and on the eleventh they left the state for the seat of war. In this short space of time, one unacquainted with the service could form but a faint idea of the work necessary to organize, equip and generally prepare the regiment for removal even, not mentioning actual service—for that takes

not only time, but means and opportunity. Each company had to prepare five copies of its muster rolls ; open a regular set of books, consisting of descriptive roll, giving a full description of every man ; clothing book, in which each man must be charged with each article of clothing furnished him ; morning report book ; order book, and first sergeant's book, for calling the rolls morning and night. All non-commissioned officers had to be appointed and commissioned, clothing in uniforms had to be issued by the quartermaster (who first drew it from the quartermaster of the state) to the company commanders, and by the company commanders to the men, and the receipt of each man taken therefor. Cooking utensils were issued to each company. Arms were drawn from the state, which proved to be so defective that they were returned and the regiment left the state without them. The men did not handle a musket until they were placed in the trenches at Covington, Kentucky, to resist a threatened attack by the rebel army of Kirby Smith. It was found impossible to draw tents of any kind in the state, and the absolute necessity for troops in Kentucky in the opinion of those in authority, to save either Louisville or Cincinnati, or both, made the orders from the Secretary of War to Governor Solomon imperative that the regiment should start for Cincinnati. The commander of the regiment protested against thus hurrying off without arms and without shelter, but received the answer that these necessary articles could be procured immediately upon arrival at Cincinnati. Surrounded by hundreds of relatives and friends who had gathered around the departing to shower their

blessings upon them, bid them Godspeed, and many of them, as time proved, a last farewell, on the night of September 11, 1862, the locomotive bore the regiment away to the far south.

The field staff and line officers at that time were as follows :

Colonel, B. J. Sweet ; lieutenant-colonel, H. C. Hobart ; Major, Frederick Schumacher ; surgeon, S. J. Carolin ; adjutant, M. H. Fitch ; quartermaster, H. C. Hamilton ; first assistant surgeon, James T. Reeve ; second assistant surgeon, S. L. Fuller ; chaplain, O. P. Clinton.

A Company—Captain, Alexander White ; first lieutenant, Nathan Leavitt ; second lieutenant, H. K. Edwards.

B Company—Captain, C. N. Paine ; first lieutenant, H. Russell ; second lieutenant, J. H. Jenkins.

C Company—Captain, A. S. Godfrey ; first lieutenant, William Wall ; second lieutenant, D. W. Mitchell.

D Company—Captain, John Jewett ; first lieutenant, H. Turner ; second lieutenant, F. W. Borchardt.

E Company—Captain, M. H. Gibbs ; first lieutenant, F. Ostenfeldt ; second lieutenant, R. J. Weisbrod.

F Company—Captain, Edgar Conklin ; first lieutenant, Milton Ewen ; second lieutenant, C. H. Morgan.

G Company—Captain, M. H. Sessions ; first lieutenant, J. C. Crawford ; second lieutenant, James W. Randall.

H Company—Captain, George Bently ; first lieutenant, F. L. Clark ; second lieutenant, T. F. Strong.

I Company—Captain, S. B. Nelson ; first lieutenant, A. B. Smith ; second lieutenant, E. Delaney.

K Company—Captain, C. H. Walker ; first lieutenant, W. Murphy ; second lieutenant, Joseph La Count.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Hobart who was commissioned, had not yet joined, having to make a sea voyage from New Orleans where he was stationed as captain, with his former regiment, the Fourth Wisconsin.

One of the pleasantest recollections of my life is what might be termed, the formative period of the twenty-first. As far as my connection with it is concerned, it began July 18, 1862, and this embryonic period ended when the regiment left the state for the seat of war, September 11th, its accouchement into the environment of actual war. This is a stretch of less than two months, yet in that short interval are crowded so many pleasant sensations, that my mind reverts to it with the keenest pleasure. My own sudden change from the dull routine of camp life in the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry, then lying at Fredericksburg, Virginia, to the luxury of hotel life, first at Fond du Lac, and finally at Oshkosh was of itself exceedingly pleasant. But added to that were also the pleasures of an intelligent and sympathetic society for a short halcyon period, away from war's alarms. The making of new acquaintances among the citizens ; the renewing of old acquaintances among the soldiers ; the greeting of the different officers and their companies as they came into camp for the first time ; the evident distinction given the officers at the headquarters of the regiment, from the colonel down to the adjutant, by the loyal people of Oshkosh ; the pride and pleasure expressed by the crowds who came to the old fair grounds at Oshkosh where

our camp was located to witness dress parade ; and the final farewell and sincere "Godspeed" on the 11th day of September, by an immense concourse of fathers, mothers, wives, sweethearts and friends ; all made a lasting and beautiful impression upon the minds of young men, who with high hopes and bounding life were so enthusiastically volunteering to fight the battles of freedom and their native land.

The uniform and accoutrements of a soldier, the straps, sword and sash of an officer, had transformed these boys into the appearance of martial heroes, to their families and friends. The change from the homely pursuits of peaceful industry to the glitter and tinselry of "grim visaged war" was so sharp cut and sudden that it had the effect of producing both in the minds of the young soldier and of his admiring friends, the keenest sensations of his life. It was like enchantment in "The Arabian Nights Entertainment" that came by the rubbing of the magic lamp.

On the part of the officers, in addition to the pleasure of display, it was also the brief exercise of power, the command of men who were taught to obey the slightest request. The sonorous words of command, given in many instances in an unmilitary tone, to which a hundred men in uniform, who theretofore while in citizen's dress, would never think of responding, now hastily and eagerly obeyed, gave zest and immense satisfaction to ten captains, the effect of which on themselves, had been before undreamed. I am not saying this to the detriment of these captains. This feeling was greatly to their credit as officers. The pride of position and power, the love of the "glorious pomp and circum-

stance of war," if not carried to a ridiculous excess, are commendable in officers. It was not confined to the line by any means. It pervaded the field officers, and in an army, the entire commissioned personnel from the general commanding down to the second lieutenants.

Our stay at Fond du Lac was short—only a few days. My memory is, that the entire headquarters there consisted only of the colonel and adjutant. The companies did not begin to arrive until some time after camp had been established at Oshkosh. The regiment itself knew only Oshkosh, and not Fond du Lac. I do not remember the exact date of opening headquarters at Oshkosh; but it was at the Adams House. Neither do I remember when the first company arrived. It was very likely Company B, which was recruited in Winnebago County, of which Oshkosh is the county seat. This was Captain James E. Stuart's and Lieutenant Edgar Vrendenburg's company. These men did not hold these offices in that company at that time, but when they did come to be commissioned captain and lieutenant, it was through such fire and blood of actual war, and for such efficiency and bravery that their names are fastened on to the company to the exclusion of those who first commanded it.

In the hot days of the latter part of August, the companies followed each other into camp in rapid succession. Captain Alexander White brought one from Fond du Lac; Captain George Bently another, and Lieutenant Milton Ewen another from the same county. Company G, of which Randall and Watson afterwards became captains came from

Waupaca. Captain Walker brought a company from Manitowoc. Gibbs, who was killed at Perryville, came with one from Calumet. What afterwards became the color company, C, was raised in Winnebago County. Captain Jewett's company was organized in Outagamie County, at Appleton. One came from Neenah and Menasha of which S. B. Nelson was first captain, and A. B. Bradish was captain at the close of the war.

Those were exciting days. It is a huge task to transform even so intelligent a body of men as the twenty-first Wisconsin from plain citizens into soldiers. The arming and equipping, the uniforming and drilling, the enrolling, the paying, the muster-in, the organization of the commissary and quartermaster departments, the drill in messing and sanitary arrangements, the calls morning, noon and night, the hospital establishment, the proper management of the ordnance department, the transportation, all made never ending details; the perfection of which ever eluded us to the end of the war. There was always something that might have been made better. Some men were always sick, some muskets always out of order, some food was always indigestible to some men, some morning reports were not correct in every particular, some officers were too solemn, others too hilarious; some showed an undue amount of martial spirit, others, and they were in the majority, not enough. Some men were stupid and never did learn the drill; others never could keep clean. Some captains had excellent control of their men; others had little. Complaints were numerous from the captains to regimental headquarters, of all

manner of imaginary neglect by the field officers, of the welfare of their men. It was seldom that any of the complaints were just. With all these drawbacks, there was perhaps not a finer body of men in the service. There were few rowdies among them. They were not frivolous in their dispositions. They were far above the average in intelligence. They were sincere and earnest in volunteering. It was a simple question with them of duty and patriotism. The thought of pay, bounty and pension, I think, did not enter their heads. They were the units of the nation, a part of the imperilled Union marching out to fight for their own. They only needed to be intelligently led, to be skilfully commanded, and they could become the military peers of any regiment in the service.

When the companies were all in, there were 1,002 men and officers on the rolls. When uniformed, armed, and equipped, their appearance at dress-parade was fine. As a body they were above the average in height and weight. As the crowd of visitors looked at them each evening at dress-parade, it saw only one picturesque result—not the dreary labor and tireless patience behind the scenes producing it. It was well it did not know. That knowledge would have taken away most of the pleasure; brought sorrow instead of joy to the heart of many a father, mother, sister or wife. But even the labor was lightened to those young soldiers by the expectation of the glorious and romantic service of an army in active duty, that arose in their imaginations. They were eager to be away to the front, especially after the muster-in, which occurred September 5, 1862.

There is much about actual war that excites the imagination and enthusiasm of the average young man. (We were all young then.) When making preparation for it, he seldom thinks of dangers. Each one thinks he will be among the surviving. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," especially in that of the soldier. Occasionally there is one who happens to think just before his death in battle that he will be killed. He may carelessly speak of the premonition to a comrade who afterwards proclaims it to be an intervention of a supernatural power, but the feeling is only a coincidence. The same feeling comes to hundreds of others who do not get killed, but who never recall the feeling again.

How many who were then present, survived the war and were mustered out in 1865 at Milwaukee? Three hundred and five died in the service—one hundred and twenty-two by the bullet, and the rest by deadly disease. A large number have died since the war. At headquarters in Oshkosh, were Colonel B. J. Sweet, Major Schumacher, Surgeon Carolin, Chaplain O. P. Clinton, Quartermaster H. C. Hamilton, Sergeant-Major B. J. Van Valkenburg, who are now all dead.

In these formative and anticipatory days, there was always a jolly coterie of choice spirits in Colonel Sweet, Major Schumacher, Quartermaster Hamilton, Dr. Carolin and Van Valkenburg. There was no lack of genuine wit and humor. At the muster-in at Oshkosh on September 5, 1862, a thousand stood in line. The same number was never in line again. That line grew shorter and shorter from the day we

left the state, until at the close of the battle of Chickamauga, it was less than one hundred. It then began to lengthen again by the return of absentees, and by new recruits, until on May 4, 1864, there were three hundred and fifty-two muskets. On the Atlanta campaign, beginning then, one hundred and nine of these were hit by bullets, and about the same number were disabled by disease. In September, 1864, the number present increased by transfers from the First and Tenth Wisconsin to about four hundred, and about this number passed in review down Pennsylvania Avenue, May 24, 1865. The transfers and new recruits were then retransferred to some other regiment, leaving present for final muster, only two hundred and sixty of the original enrollment, who were mustered out at Milwaukee, June 17, 1865. More than one-third of them were killed and wounded. Sixty-four of them were killed in their first battle. They marched and fought by a crooked line of maneuvers from Louisville to Atlanta; thence to the sea through Georgia; from Savannah north through both Carolinas and Virginia to Washington, D. C.

Until the final surrender, it was a death struggle with an able foe. Its line of march was red with the carnage of Perryville, Stone River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Resacca, New Hope Church, Kenesaw Mountain, Marietta, Chattahoochee, Peach Tree Creek, Atlanta, Jonesboro, Savannah, Averbysboro, and Bentonville. Those who endured it all and survived, and those who died in the service, are pure gold. The memory of those who lost their lives is enshrined in the hearts of the living. The rec-

ords of their grateful country will hand down their names and deeds to future generations because of the heroic part they performed in the most justifiable civil war of the ages.

CHAPTER V

BATTLE OF PERRYVILLE

The regiment first goes to Covington, Kentucky, thence to Louisville—It becomes a part of the Twenty-eighth Brigade in Rousseau's Division—Left Louisville October 1st and fought in the battle of Perryville, October 8th—An account of the battle and the losses of the regiment—An episode with a slaveholder and his slave.

WITHIN two days after leaving the state of Wisconsin, the regiment was in the trenches at Covington, Kentucky, opposite Cincinnati with arms, but all efforts failed in the most complete and profound disorder and confusion of that memorable scare, to find any tents to draw, and therefore with rails and boughs of evergreens and other trees, the men made themselves as comfortable as raw troops could. The only water to drink was that of Licking River, from which the green scum had to be skimmed, only to find muddy water underneath. But after a very few days of this kind of life here, the regiment proceeded to Louisville, Kentucky, by rail, was placed in the division of General P. H. Sheridan, and commenced work immediately upon a line of intrenchments environing that city. At three o'clock each morning it was marched out into these trenches to remain until after daylight to resist any attack which might be made by the enemy, who were at that time in the vicinity. Buell's army from Tennessee and Alabama arrived in a few days. The danger of an attack was then considered at an

end. Arrangements were immediately made to march against the enemy. Reorganization of brigades and divisions was necessary. The twenty-first was assigned to the twenty-eighth brigade (General Starkweather) of Rousseau's division. For the first time tents were drawn, and then only by the most persistent, and almost forcible means, the colonel commanding accompanied by some officers of his regiment going in person to the chief quartermaster at Louisville and absolutely forcing him to deliver tents to the quartermaster of the regiment. The regiment lay at Louisville about three weeks. The location of the camp was changed in this period by orders, four times, to as many different places. Transportation, tents, and ammunition were drawn here. The transportation consisted of thirteen six-mule teams. Two years after, the regiment was more comfortable and better served with thirteen single mules, because it had learned how to take care of itself. On the morning of the first of October, 1862, the pursuit of Bragg's rebel army commenced, the twenty-first beginning at that time, its first march and approaching its first battle. In consequence of the numerous changes of camp, the drawing of full equipage, constant fatigue duty in digging trenches, it had been impossible to hold battalion drill down to this date, but three times. The men were absolutely without any experience, and could not obey commands from not knowing what they imported. To add to the trials of the new situation the weather was hot in the day and cold at night. No rain had fallen for days and the country passed over was singularly destitute of water for either man or

beast. Like all new troops, they endeavored to carry too much and consequently many gave out, and all, after the first day's march, either threw away or otherwise disposed of surplus clothing, blankets, etc. The line of march lay through Taylorsville, Bloomfield, Chaplin and Mackville. These places are unimportant aggregations of houses, stores, and shops with a few hundred people. The social element in them being colored (the only ones social with the Union troops), crowds of negroes visited the line of daily march and as many as could, visited our camps at night. At Bloomfield, the regiment remained one day, the army apparently being halted to allow the advanced cavalry to reconnoitre for the enemy, as our movements depended entirely on his.

While here three Kentucky farmers came into camp seeking a negro whom they said was in the camp of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, and after having a controversy with the men, desired the colonel commanding to deliver him to them. He declined to interfere. "We came down here to suppress a rebellion against the United States government and not to steal negroes, nor yet to be negro catchers. If your negro is in our camp, you can take him, but I shall give you no assistance in running after him." The slave masters not liking the chilling northern aspect of the soldiers, sought division headquarters. Soon an order came down by a mounted orderly instructing that the negro should be given up, and after delivering it, unfortunately the orderly in passing out of camp stopped at a crowd of the Twenty-first Wisconsin men who were discussing the question of delivering slaves to slave masters, and entered into a

controversy. The result was that the orderly soon found it convenient to hasten as fast as his horse could well carry him out of camp, with corn-cobs flying in rather close proximity about his head. The episode was not seen from the headquarters of the regiment. The orderly immediately reported to his general (L. H. Rousseau), not the fact that outside of his duties as orderly, he was thus roughly handled, but that in passing through the camp of the twenty-first, he was stoned and driven out by the men. This naturally aroused the impulsive passions of this fiery commander who took it as an insult to himself, and without further inquiry, he mounted his horse, had the three other regiments of the brigade, of which the twenty-first formed a part, under arms, surround the twenty-first, which he with many imprecations dire, ordered to be formed in line. Thus standing, he addressed the twenty-first saying he would kill the man or men who attacked his orderly, and was determined to find out who it was. The colonel immediately called upon any man who had thrown at the orderly to step forward from the ranks. A half-a-dozen or more, without the least hesitation, stepped out. They were marched off to division headquarters and the parade dismissed. In a short time thereafter the field officers waited upon the general, protested against the hasty and harsh insult upon the regiment by surrounding it with other troops. The general was informed of the facts in the case, apologized and sent the men back without punishment. The slave in the meantime had escaped out of camp and the owner did not recover him.

On the 7th of October, the twenty-first encamped near Mackville. The enemy was evidently not far away, as many things indicated. The careful manner in which the troops moved, stray rebel cavalrymen seen on the flanks, an occasional artillery shot in the distance, staff officers and orderlies moving back and forward hastily, as if bearing important dispatches, were all signs of the coming conflict. On the morning of the 8th, it became the duty of the twenty-first, in regular rotation, to act as guard to the brigade train which moved with the train of the division, in the rear of the line of troops of the whole division. But we are told that the "first shall be last and the last first," which we shall now see was verified in this case, because the regiment in the battle, was placed in front of the line of the whole division. The day was very hot, and the hard clay soil of that section was baked by the long drought. The road was excessively dusty, the men suffered exceedingly from thirst, and the great dust, raised by the army in front and the wagons in the rear. Of all disagreeable positions in the line of march, that of wagon guard is the most perfect specimen. One detachment marches in front of the wagons, another behind, and if the train is long, another in the centre, while the whole length of the train must be covered on either side by a line of skirmishers placed at least one hundred paces from the train. The skirmishers must be relieved periodically, must climb fences, march through fields, over ditches, and keep always a sharp lookout for the enemy. 'Twas this way, the twenty-first marched twelve miles in the forenoon of the 8th. The colonel was sick,

riding at the head of his regiment, in an ambulance, and Major Schumacher was in immediate command. Towards noon, the artillery firing ahead became more frequent and nearer. The halts in the line of march came oftener and lasted longer, indicating trouble in front. A squad of strange cavalry was reported off our left, and two companies, B and C, were sent in that direction to reconnoitre and if possible attack them. But this did not prevent the main line from gradually moving forward. This reported cavalry turned out to be the right of the rebel line, then formed for attack. Slowly the wagon train moved on through the heat and excessive dust, raised by the whole army that preceded it, until it came to a halt within sight of the Union line, formed in battle array off the left of the road. This was about the middle of the afternoon. An occasional artillery shot towards the front from a piece placed on a little knoll was all that indicated that the enemy was near, but there was that indescribable impression in the air of coming conflict, which the regiment came afterwards so well to know. The colonel sent the adjutant forward to report the twenty-first on hand, and to ask for orders. The adjutant rode rapidly forward and reported to the brigade commander, General Starkweather. The order from the brigade commander was to bring the regiment to the front and place it in the reserve in two lines immediately behind the line of battle. He indicated the spot—a good one. From this position, it could have supported any part of the line at a moment's notice. The regiment was brought forward and was thus being placed, when General

Rousseau commanding the division, rode up to the adjutant who happened to be alone at the head of the regiment, the colonel and major being at other points along the line of the regiment, and pointing to the front said, "Place that regiment in that corn-field, facing that way," indicating by his hand a position at right angles, to the one then held, and from one hundred and fifty to two hundred paces in front. The adjutant conveyed the order to the colonel, who had left the ambulance, and mounted his horse to assume the command in the battle, and the regiment was promptly moved to the position indicated. With the precision of veteran soldiers, they moved down the hill behind which they were first placed, across a ravine, over a fence, up through the tall and thick corn, threw out a line of left guides and went into place, "on the right by file into line." This was all done under fire of the rebels, so severe that many men were shot down before stepping into line. These shots came over the heads of Jackson's division, that had been formed in line in the front and to the right, some distance, and were then opening the battle, but neither they nor the enemy could be seen by the twenty-first through the thick corn in front and the woods on the right. Therefore the twenty-first did not then fire, but could do nothing but wait the turn of events beyond their sight and knowledge. They had not long to wait. Very soon the broken and bleeding troops of Jackson's division overpowered, exhausted by heat and marching, many of them wounded, and the rest demoralized (for they were mostly new troops), came pouring back upon the line of the twenty-first in crowds, and several

hundred of them halted just in front of the twenty-first, but without any formation. At this point, General William R. Terrill, who commanded a brigade in Jackson's division, dismounted, and apparently almost overcome with vexation and exhaustion, passed to the rear by the right of the twenty-first. He said to the adjutant as he passed, that the rebels were advancing in terrible force, and that the only way in which the twenty-first could avoid being crushed was to wait until they came near enough, and then charge bayonets upon them. This information the adjutant hurried to carry to the colonel, who was opposite the centre of the line, but found him wounded. In the meantime, the firing had become terrific, and it seemed at that time strange, that all the firing from the Federal troops, came from the rear of the twenty-first. Reports came from the captains along the line that the men of the twenty-first were being killed by shots from a battery in the rear, and that there were no supports on our flanks, but then it was too late to change position by the slow movement of military tactics, for in less time than it takes to write this, a frightful rush of the disorganized troops who had gathered in the front of the twenty-first, was made to the rear through the ranks of the regiment, followed so closely by the rebel lines that it was impossible for the excessively timid ones to resist going back with the rush, and before the remainder could again close up the line thus broken, the enemy had lapped both flanks and were in addition to firing in front, enfilading the lines. The firing of the regiment checked for a time the rebel advance, but it flashed upon the men at once that alone, a

good rifle shot in front of the Union lines as then established, the twenty-first were absolutely fighting against the rebel right wing. The firing had become so terrific, that orders could not be heard though given to retire. The exceptions are rare in battle that regiments fall back, or in military phrase, retreat in unbroken lines under heavy fire. The writer of this does not remember an instance in his experience that a regiment, forced back by a charge of the enemy, did so in good order. The only comparative merit that one regiment can claim over another in such circumstances, is in the power to rally at a convenient point and be ready to again meet the enemy. The twenty-first was compelled here to retreat over a high fence, through a ravine and then up the face of a bare hill, which the fire of the enemy could sweep with terrific effect. In passing over the obstacles, it became broken, but it rallied again finely, under the fire of the enemy, in rear of the main Union line, where it remained the rest of the day. In this second position, the colonel was wounded a second time, and was carried from the field. This was the wound that disabled him. In a very few minutes after the rallying of the twenty-first, the other regiments of the brigade fell back to the same place. The rebels did not push farther towards our front, but kept up a continual fire until it was quite dark, and both armies being entirely exhausted ceased firing and rested from the conflict.

The two companies, B and C, which had been sent to look after the rebel cavalry, reported as seen off the left of the train, moved in a circuitous route, and came upon the

battle-field after the twenty-first had taken position in the corn-field. Not being able to find the twenty-first in the regular line of battle with the other regiments of the brigade, they reported to the brigade commander, who very wisely decided not to send them to the perilous position of the regiment, as he had had nothing to do with placing the twenty-first there originally, but ordered them to form in with the First Wisconsin. They did so, and fought with that regiment until the first fell back to the second position of the twenty-first.

General Lovell H. Rousseau says of the Twenty-first Wisconsin in his official report of the battle of Perryville :

“The Twenty-first Wisconsin, Colonel Sweet, was to the front of these batteries in a corn-field, lying down awaiting the approach of the enemy, and when he approached with his overwhelming force, this new regiment poured into his ranks a most withering fire. The steady advance and heavy fire of the enemy caused a portion of the regiment to break in confusion, but the most of it under its gallant officers, stood manfully to its work, until forced to retire.”

During the early part of the night of the 8th, a new line of battle was selected still farther in the rear, in a rising wood. On the way thither, the twenty-first passed in the dead stillness of night, made more oppressive and solemn by the contrast with the thunder and confusion of battle just died away, through the enclosure of a country house which had been made a hospital. The yard was literally covered with the wounded, dead and dying. The dead silence was broken by the most painful groans of the wounded. A halt

happened to leave the twenty-first in this yard for a few moments, where the men could look and learn the dire results of war and exposure. 'Twas a sad spectacle, and one never to be forgotten. There lay the sons of doting mothers, the brothers of orphan sisters, the husbands of wives who would be left alone to buffet the world's cold neglect, and fathers whose age had not prevented their responding to the call of country. A few hours before they were as strong and full of hope as those who marched by them. Now they lay helpless and dying, far away from loving eyes or soothing hands. Could those who looked upon them fail to think how narrowly they escaped from the same fate? Squads were sent upon the field that night to bring in the wounded. Some of these found the enemy in the same place, upon the same duty. Many Union soldiers were taken prisoners in this manner.

The new position taken by the regiment that night was occupied for two days. In the meantime, the rebels retreated. The 9th was occupied in burying the dead, which was done by a detail of about twenty men under Captain Sessions of G Company. The officers killed were Major Schumacher, Captains Gibbs of E Company, Bently of H Company, and Lieutenant Mitchell of C Company. The whole number of officers and men killed, wounded and missing were as follows: Killed, forty-two; wounded, one hundred and one; missing, thirty-six; total, one hundred and seventy-nine.

Many criticisms have been made upon this battle, both by those who were present and by some who were not.

The part taken by the twenty-first was gallant and creditable in the extreme. 'Tis true they were overpowered and forced back, but not until a whole division (Jackson's) in their front had been overpowered, and retreated. The position it was placed in by the commander of the division, and left in by the indifference of the brigade commander, was the refinement of cruelty. It was between the fire of the enemy and that of our own troops in its immediate rear. The other regiments of the brigade had then been a year in the service and were well drilled and under fine discipline. They were given good positions in rear of the only new regiment in the brigade. Our correct position was in line with the other regiments on the hill behind. The division commander afterwards denied ordering the regiment to this position, but I know that he did. He gave me the order. This position of the regiment was very precarious, for the reason that at the time the men knew nothing of the battalion drill, and had never before fired their pieces. The manner of going into the fight, the coolness and intrepidity with which the men took position while being shot down by the enemy, the stubborn resistance given to him even after the line was broken, fell under the eye of the writer, who was not at all surprised at the heavy loss to the regiment.



Benjamin J. Sweet.

CHAPTER VI

COLONEL BENJAMIN J. SWEET

Colonel Sweet wounded and Major Schumacher killed in the battle of Perryville—No field officer with the regiment—The loss in killed and mortally wounded at Perryville one of the remarkable losses of the war—General Buell failed as a commander of an army—A character sketch of Colonel Benjamin J. Sweet.

IN the battle of Perryville, Colonel Sweet was so badly wounded that he never rejoined the regiment. Major Schumacher was killed outright. As the lieutenant-colonel had not yet joined the regiment, this battle left it without a field officer. Captain Alexander White of A Company assumed command and remained in command until the lieutenant-colonel came to us at Lebanon, Kentucky, in the latter part of October, 1862. William F. Fox, in his "Regimental Losses in the Civil War," gives the loss of the twenty-first at Perryville in killed and mortally wounded, as one of the remarkable losses of the war. The number is sixty-four out of one hundred and forty-three hit by shot and shell. This large percentage of killed compared with the number wounded shows how close and deadly the fighting was. The large proportion of killed in the whole forces engaged in comparison with the whole number struck in this battle, is equaled only by that of the battle of Williamsburg on the Potomac. Some time since I read an account of the battle of Perryville written by a member of another

regiment. From the wording of the article, one would think that regiment fought the battle almost alone; but when I looked up the record, I found the loss of that regiment to be three wounded. It is not my intention to discuss the battle further, nor to comment much on its general features. Very many accounts of it have been written. I think the fact is generally recognized, however, that if the Union forces had been skilfully handled, the rebel army should have been crushed, and its transportation and plunder captured. But instead, Bragg got away with everything he had picked up in Kentucky and "ran away to fight again another day." General George H. Thomas who was second in command to General D. C. Buell, showed by his subsequent success in winning battles, that if he had commanded there, the result might have been different. General Buell seemed to lack the most essential quality of a commander. He hesitated. He was not prompt and aggressive when the time was ripe. It seems to me that he ought to have known that McCook's corps was in battle, and been up to the front with his staff. Had he pushed in all his available forces with quickness and the utmost energy, there is no doubt that Bragg would have been crushed. However plausible his excuses were, the fact is, a general who does not crush the enemy when thus in his power, is not competent.

My first acquaintance with Colonel Benjamin J. Sweet, began at Prescott, Wisconsin, early in June, 1861, when as major of the sixth infantry, he came there and mustered into the state service, the "Prescott Guards." He was then

in the prime of early manhood, being only twenty-nine years old. His face was attractive, and flushed with the glow of perfect health. His brown eye looked with a twinkle of appreciation upon what he approved, but with instant sternness upon what he disliked. His bearing and manner were prompt and exceedingly energetic. He had before this been a state senator from Calumet and Manitowoc counties. He was a favorite with Governor A. W. Randall, who appointed him major of the Sixth Wisconsin volunteers. As the anxious boys of the guards, then somewhat drilled in the school of the soldier, stood in line dressed in red shirts, black pants, and gray caps, and listened to the eloquent words that fell from the lips of the major, predicting for them grand achievements in the coming conflict, it was an inspiring picture not soon to be forgotten. It has not been forgotten by me. As I now look back over the long line of years that have come and gone since then, the impression is as vivid as if it had occurred only yesterday. From that time until his death in 1874, my relations with him were very close. In what I say in this volume of the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry, his connection with that regiment is described. Also in the chapter upon the organization of the twenty-first, his short command of that regiment, and his executive ability in its creation are set forth.

The position of major and lieutenant-colonel were not congenial to him. He was ambitious and sanguine. He needed at all times activity and command. He chafed under the control of an immediate commander, over whose actions he had no influence, and for whose ability he had no

respect. Hence, when a new call was about to be made by the President in 1862, Colonel Sweet resigned from the sixth, and was very soon commissioned by Governor Solomon, colonel of the twenty-first.

With his accustomed energy and enthusiasm, he visited in quick succession, Fond du Lac, Appleton, Neenah, Menasha, Oshkosh, Chilton, Manitowoc, and Waupaca. In each of these places, he either assisted in organizing a company or arranged with companies already organized to join his regiment. He selected the field and staff and recommended to the governor, the line officers for commissions. He had lived among the people of this district all his life; he was a student at Lawrence University at Appleton; he had ably represented a portion of them in the state senate; his character, his reputation, his ability were known of them as those of a neighbor. The companies were made up of old acquaintances and companions. He did not come among strangers, nor as a soldier martinet. The captains and first lieutenants of companies were taken from among the most prominent and influential men of the different localities. In the governor's office at Madison was a list of sergeants of regiments in the field who had been recommended by their officers for promotion. These had seen service in the field during the year preceding. From this list, the second lieutenants of the twenty-first were selected.

Criticism and fault-finding are always dangerous in the time of war, but forty years after, it is harmless; history can then take it up and is apt to place occurrences where they really belong. A little harmless conjecture now as to

the manner of officering regiments at that time is entirely proper. Suppose the captains had been selected from those lieutenants in the field who had shown an aptitude for military affairs and who had already distinguished themselves, and the first and second lieutenants been elected from the ranks, would this have given more efficiency from the beginning? The field officers and adjutant were all experienced officers of a year's service.

If the captains had been thus selected, the drill and discipline of the regiment at the time it left the state in September, 1862, might have been much greater, and perhaps the great loss in the first battle been correspondingly reduced. This is only conjecture, for the captains of the twenty-first did as well as average officers taken from civil life could have done. They were intelligent in civil matters and brave. Their only lack was, in some, aptitude for military life, and in all, previous experience, which not even genius can replace. The one who remained and fought through the war came out an efficient officer. Two, viz. : Gibbs of E Company and Bently of H Company, were killed in the first battle. Jewett of D Company died of disease ; six resigned ; one was promoted major. Not one of the original first lieutenants remained with the regiment until the close of the war. Turner, Ostenfeldt and Smith were wounded and discharged. Thus in time Second Lieutenants Edwards, Borchardt, Weisbrod, Morgan, Randall, and La Count Sergeants Stuart, Hubbard, Otto, Dorian, Watson, and Bradish became the commanders of companies as finely drilled and as brave as ever stood in battle array,

but it took several months of precious time to accomplish this.

Very few of the regiment had opportunity in the short time Colonel Sweet remained with the twenty-first to learn his real character. While extremely social and fond of his friends, the arduous duties of his position and the cold necessities of discipline kept him in those days from indulging the real bent of his nature. He could make no appointment without offending those not appointed. It was his stern duty to do that in every instance which he conceived to be for the good of the service, irrespective of friendship.

In the nature of things, all the newly made officers from civil life would ask many things to be done which could not be granted. Colonel Sweet was always equal to the emergency. He was prompt to decide, and exceedingly vigorous in execution. In the sixth infantry his position of major and lieutenant-colonel gave him leisure to indulge his natural disposition. Those who were then his companions and friends remember his literary tastes, his warm friendships, his conversational talents. His intellect was poetical. Not only was he fond of reading poetry, but wrote terse gems—sonnets containing thoughts, worthy to live. Sometimes when riding at the head of his regiment over those historic grounds where the Army of the Potomac was wont in 1861, to march and countermarch, his mind would wander away from his immediate environment into the realms of the sweetest fancy. He was passionately fond of music. He was not highly educated in the schools, but he was a constant

student. His memory of what he had read was wonderful. He was an admirer of German authors and read Goethe and Schiller in their native tongue. His reading of English authors was very extensive. His early life was spent in the rural districts and on a farm, but his superior intellect and innate nobility of character lifted him in his early manhood to a high plane of thinking and acting. His youthful struggles had been too exacting to allow him to cultivate French manners, and that suavity which would have made him more superficial friends. But whoever could break through the outer shell of austerity, which leisure and the schools only could have polished away, would find, beneath, nobility of character and purity of motive. Of course the six or eight weeks he remained with the twenty-first were far too short and too much occupied with discipline to disclose his inner character to the men in the ranks. Therefore, but few of the regiment really knew Colonel Sweet. He was not perhaps, at any time of his life, a popular man ; a man to be popular must constantly be conceding something—he must at times appear to be what he is not. Ordinarily, he must be a negative character. Colonel Sweet, on the other hand, had a very positive nature. Directness was one of his characteristics. He did not endeavor to appear other than what he was. When the regiment left the state for the seat of war, it was organized, it is true, but even that was imperfect. It was not at that time drilled nor under military discipline. Some of the companies were under better control than others. But as a unit, to be swayed by the voice of its commanding officer in battle, to crouch at a motion of

his hand and spring upon the foe like a royal Bengal tiger, to make a charge just so far and obey the recall just at the proper moment—these high qualities came to it later by experience in battle, long drilling and familiarity with its arms and officers ; and also with the spade ; but not in its first battle on the 8th of October, 1862, at Perryville. As the result of his wounds in the battle of Perryville, Colonel Sweet lay for months lingering between life and death, at his home in Chilton. He never recovered the use of his right arm, and was really an invalid the rest of his life. When he recovered sufficiently, he was transferred to the invalid corps with the rank of colonel. In 1864, he was placed in command of Camp Douglas at Chicago, in charge of several thousand Confederate prisoners. In this capacity, he developed remarkable ability in discovering and suppressing a conspiracy for the release of these prisoners and the burning of Chicago. He arrested a number of prominent Confederates who had come from Canada, and their coadjutors in Chicago. By really ignoring the city government and taking the responsibility, he undoubtedly thwarted a conspiracy. He never received the credit due him for these acts. He was, however, made a brevet brigadier-general. After the war, he became pension agent at Chicago, then deputy commissioner of internal revenue at Washington, where he died in 1874. As we look back over his connection with the Twenty-first Wisconsin, the wonder is that so much could be accomplished in so short a time. In a little more than two months, the regiment was recruited, organized, equipped, mustered in, taken by rail and river

from Oshkosh to Louisville, Kentucky, marched through the hot dusty roads to Perryville, and went into that fated corn-field "on the right by file into line," as bravely as veterans. The experience there was short but terribly effective. No braver act did the regiment perform in its subsequent career nor during the rest of its campaigns, did it lose so many in killed and wounded.

Without detracting from the merits of any one who after Perryville, commanded the regiment, and who performed none of the drudgery of organization, who inherited a command without effort, it is a matter of deep regret to General Sweet's friends that he who labored so hard and accomplished in so short a time such brilliant results in the organization, should have been so fearfully wounded in the first battle, and could not command the regiment in its older and triumphant days. It certainly would have been poetic justice at least, could one who did the drudgery of organization, the less heroic and unnoted work of petty preparation, could have reaped the glory of after triumphs and its rewards; could have ridden at the head of his disciplined and battle scarred veterans "from Atlanta to the sea."

CHAPTER VII

FROM PERRYVILLE TO STONE RIVER

The feeble pursuit of the rebel army from Perryville to Crab Orchard—From that place the army turned west and marched to Lebanon, the first convenient point on a railway connecting with Louisville—The Lieutenant-Colonel joined the regiment for the first time—Marched from Lebanon to Bowling Green on the Big Barren River—Here Surgeon Carolin died—An account of this officer given—At Bowling Green, General Buell was succeeded by General W. S. Rosecrans—Reference to General Thomas' declination of the command September 29th preceding—The brigade marched from Bowling Green to Mitchellville—Numerous deaths in the regiment at Mitchellville and its departure, December 7th, for Nashville.

OUR division did not leave the vicinity of Perryville until October 11th, following timidly the retreating rebel army by way of Harrodsburg to Crab Orchard. From here I wrote home the following letter :

*“ Crab Orchard, Kentucky,
“ October 16, 1862.*

“ Our fighting was done in a corn-field where the rebels did not discover the boys until they rose and discharged the contents of their pieces into them at a distance of twenty yards. The rebel line overlapped our regiment on both flanks, and still advanced, when our regiment fell back behind a battery and the line of the First Wisconsin and Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania. These regiments being well placed for defense, stopped the farther advance of the rebel line. Our colonel was wounded in the neck and arm. He is now thirty-five miles in the rear. The major was killed on the spot, having received one wound in the breast and

another in the head. . . . The boys did splendidly, considering they had been in the service but one month, and had been drilled as a battalion only four times. They formed under a heavy fire, and before they got into line, began dropping. The first man shot, was just in front of me. His leg was broken just below the knee. I ordered two men to carry him back, and not until then did he know what was the matter with him. My horse received a bullet in his neck, which is there yet, but he is perfectly well. I did not receive a scratch."

At Crab Orchard, the pursuit was abandoned. October 19th, we turned west, marched to Lebanon, Ky., and went into camp. At Lebanon, Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Hobart joined the regiment for the first time. He commanded it from this time until he was taken prisoner at Chickamauga, September 20, 1863. He remained a prisoner until he escaped through the famous tunnel in February, 1864, and joined the regiment on Lookout Mountain in April, 1864. In the latter part of June, 1864, at Kennesaw, he was detached as demi-brigade commander. He remained detached from that time until the close of the war. I saw Colonel Hobart for the first time at Lebanon. He was then forty-eight years old, with much experience in public affairs. In 1859, he was the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for governor of Wisconsin, against A. W. Randall, the Republican candidate; had been in the legislature; was a good talker, and a man of much influence at home. He was very ambitious and persevering. He was sympathetic and looked well after the physical welfare of his men. He would not punish a man if there was any way to avoid it. This made him very popular with the men.

His genial conversational power soon made him favorably known with a great many officers of high and low rank. Colonel M. C. Taylor, of the Fifteenth Kentucky, General John Beatty, and General Lovell H. Rousseau became very friendly with him.

From the time of leaving Louisville, October 1st, until arriving at Lebanon, the regiment was without tents. This being a railroad town, we received the tents and equipage again. From Lebanon on October 29th, the regiment marched towards Bowling Green, arriving there November 4th. That same night, our surgeon, Samuel J. Carolin, suddenly died of heart disease. At the breaking out of the war, he was a practicing physician at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. I do not think he was an old resident of that city. He was an Irishman by birth, educated as a physician at Paris, France, and appeared, acted, and talked like an educated man. Both at Fond du Lac, where the headquarters of the regiment was first established, and at Oshkosh, where the headquarters were transferred and the companies came together and were organized into the regiment, I was thrown a great deal in the company of Dr. Carolin, he and I both being on the regimental staff. He was convivial, witty and scholarly. His conversation habitually drifted into a discussion of literature and science. Unfortunately, he was very high tempered and would frequently allow himself to fly into a passion—not so often at the men in the ranks (he was too chivalrous for that), as at some of the officers. He was quite fastidious in his dress and rode a rather high-stepping and untamed dapple-gray horse. He

was hardly adapted to the rough and tumble life of the soldier in the field. He was small of stature with a florid countenance, rather fussy in his manner, but always a gentleman in his demeanor and knew exactly what treatment was due from one gentleman to another. He was a little too much inclined at times to lay stress on his position as major and surgeon, for a new volunteer, but showed with it all so much real ability and natural good fellowship, that those who knew him best soon learned to like and respect him. Without remembering much about it now, and really knowing little about it at the time, yet my impression is that he organized the medical department of the regiment very ably. He was greatly assisted in this by two very efficient assistant surgeons, Dr. J. T. Reeve and Dr. S. L. Fuller, both of whom became afterwards full surgeons. I do not know his age, but he was so much older than I, knew so much more of the world, and showed such a friendly willingness, that he was of very great assistance to me in more ways than one. Although he was of a natural military turn, of course he knew nothing of military drill or the duties of a field officer, but in the many delicate questions that will always arise among men so closely associated as officers constantly are in a regiment, or a brigade, or a division, his judgment was very correct. I was adjutant during the short time the doctor was with the regiment, very much inferior to him in rank, but he did not seem to notice that and formed with me the closest friendship. My impression is that he was not popular with the men of the regiment. He was too exacting with them. I have been told it was the

same with the medical officers who came in contact with him. He was intolerant of incapacity and blundering, asserted his rights as a surgeon, and impressed others that he was inclined to sneer at them.

The only battle in which the regiment engaged while the doctor was with us, was Perryville. The weather was hot, the roads very dusty, and water scarce. The regiment was undrilled, undisciplined, and the men had not yet become, as they afterwards so finely became, obedient to the requirements of the service. Their muscles, now for the first time called into action by marching and drilling, were soft. The captains and first lieutenants had never been in service before. The result was that the ambulances and wagons were filled with knapsacks, accoutrements, and soldiers. It tested the patience of Dr. Carolin to care for them. There was naturally a great deal of friction between him and the captains of the companies who wanted to favor their men. I rode at the head of the regiment and did not see much of it, but Major Schumacher and Dr. Carolin rode in the rear and saw it all. It was under these circumstances that the doctor and Captain Bently of H Company came to words and almost to blows. The captain either for himself or for some of his men wanted to use an ambulance. For reasons now forgotten, the doctor refused. No two men could have been more in contrast in their mental characteristics and human traits than these two officers. Carolin, small, sanguine, high strung, educated, fastidious in his tastes; Bently, tall, pale, equally high strung, blunt as a westerner and railroader, uneducated. Both admirable in their high

sense of duty, their bravery, and their honest manhood.

It is not necessary now to remember the details of the short, sharp, and decisive controversy, but it was just before the battle. The captain went into the battle with his company and was killed on the field that same afternoon. While we were standing in that well remembered corn-field, whose green stalks were soon reddened with the blood of the blue and the gray, the doctor rode to us on his dappled gray, through a heavy fire of the enemy, with an order from Starkweather for the men to lie down. It should have been an order to change position to the line of the brigade. It was with difficulty by reason of the firing he could get his horse near enough to deliver the order. But he not only rode to the position of the colonel, but to mine also, near the line on the right, said a few pleasant words, then slowly rode back again to Starkweather behind the position of the First Wisconsin, some distance in our rear. It was an act of bravery, for it was not his duty to carry an order from Starkweather to the front line, and I suspect he made the suggestion to Starkweather and then volunteered to deliver it. It was a brave and chivalrous act. At the same time, every soldier can raise his hat to the memory of brave Captain George Bently who was killed in the midst of the battle on the front line, near where Major Schumacher fell.

At night after the battle had died away, I was standing by a bivouac fire when Carolin joined me. He had just come from the hospital where Colonel Sweet lay wounded, his

arm shattered at the elbow. He explained to me the exact nature of Sweet's wound, and said he desired to take off the arm, but that Sweet himself, and the other surgeons objected. He then told me that if the arm was taken off, Sweet would likely get well and rejoin the regiment in three months, but if it were not taken off, he might die, and would certainly linger in pain for a year or more, and might never be able to join the regiment. The conversation was of considerable length, and made an impression on my mind. The arm was not taken off, and the prediction then made by Carolin was literally fulfilled.

Colonel Sweet came near dying. The shattered arm was painful and unhealed for months, and he never rejoined his regiment but was finally, eleven months after the battle, transferred to the invalid corps. His arm remained stiff as long as he lived. He could not bend the elbow joint. I have frequently wondered what the result would have been, had the arm been taken off.

At Murfreesboro in the spring of 1863, Dr. E. B. Wolcott of Milwaukee was visiting our regiment. In speaking then of Sweet's condition, he said the arm saved was worth more to Sweet than the whole state of Tennessee. I doubt that statement very decidedly. I afterwards learned from Dr. James T. Reeve that before Colonel Sweet was placed under the influence of chloroform for the examination and probing of his wound, he exacted a promise from him and perhaps the other surgeons, that his arm should not be taken off. When the examination was made, Carolin wanted to amputate the arm. The others would not consent to violate

the promise to Sweet. Carolin said their duty as surgeons was to do the best thing for the patient, that he (the patient) did not know what was best. From a surgeon's standpoint, Dr. Carolin was probably right. All the surgeons present, however, should have united in a firm request to Colonel Sweet, to allow the arm to be amputated, and first obtain his consent to the amputation.

While talking at this camp-fire with Dr. Carolin, a certain captain of the twenty-first came up on the opposite side of the fire, holding one of his hands in the other, and expressing great pain in his face. He said nothing to the doctor, but the latter gave him one quick glance across the fire and quietly pulled a pocket lance out of his vest pocket, unseen by the captain. Holding the lance between his thumb and forefinger of his right hand so that the captain should not see it, he continued the conversation with me a short time, then very deliberately walked around the fire to where the captain was standing and casually asked him what the matter was with his hand. The captain unsuspectingly held out his hand to the doctor and pointed to a small spot near the end of one of his fingers. Instantly the doctor saw it was an incipient felon. Gently pulling the hand down nearer to the light of the fire until he saw just where to strike, he sent that lance to the finger bone in a flash. As he drew it out the suppuration followed the blade; the captain gave one leap into the air, and it was all over, the pain disappeared instantly. I thought for an instant that the captain would strike the doctor but he did not. He was taken completely by surprise, however.

The doctor's diagnosis of Colonel Sweet's condition, the confidence with which he predicted the results that actually came to pass and this quick, unhesitating, although simple surgical operation, without saying, "by your leave," were conclusive proofs of a well equipped surgeon and a very "nervy" man. A more timid and conscientious surgeon would have parleyed and argued the matter with the patient, thus gaining his friendship, but not curing the pain and subsequent suffering.

While in camp at Lebanon, Kentucky, we rested comfortably for the first time in a real camp since leaving Louisville about October 1st. In the interim between the battle and this camp, some foolish scribbler in the regiment had sent a letter back to Wisconsin reflecting on the action of the Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania in the battle of Perryville. It was published in some paper, and in some way a copy had found its way back and into the hands of Colonel Hambright of that regiment. He very indignantly wrote a letter addressed either to me or the captain in command of the twenty-first, asking that something be done about it, and also containing a covert threat if the matter was not corrected, etc. I consulted Dr. Carolin as to the proper answer to make to that letter and upon his advice, wrote Colonel Hambright that our commanding officer could not reply properly to his letter, until the threat therein was formally withdrawn. Just at this stage of the affair, Colonel Hobart arrived. I laid the whole correspondence before him and he highly approved of the reply to Hambright. I do not now remember how it finally terminated. I mention it

only to show how tactful the doctor was, and how intellectually helpful.

The night that Carolin died, we sat up late at the headquarters camp-fire, made of seasoned logs. The talk had drifted into a discussion of some literary subject, now forgotten. The fire had died down and I retired to my couch in a tent close by, leaving the colonel and the doctor still talking in the glare of the splendid bed of coals. As I lost consciousness the sound of their voices seemed to die away. In the morning, I was informed that the doctor was dead.

Thus passed away two of the most striking characters in the regiment, the doctor and Captain Bently who perhaps never saw each other after the little episode in the march just before the battle of Perryville, and this chapter contains nearly all that I can now remember of either after we left the camp at Oshkosh, in September, 1862. For those were busy days that left little time for social intercourse. In less than two short months from muster-in, both were dead. One died by the bullet of the enemy, the other in no less an effective manner; both by the dread enemy of all mankind—one as sudden as the other. I do not know, but I conjecture that their remains lie in near by graves at Fond du Lac. The same epitaph can consistently be written above both graves: "Peace to the ashes of the brave."

We lay at Bowling Green until November 10th. In that time, General W. S. Rosecrans relieved General Buell in command of the army. I remember riding out with some other officers to meet General Rosecrans. They all gave

him a hearty welcome. He had been a successful commander in West Virginia and Mississippi, and came with a fine reputation. On assuming command he had the army placed in line and made a short address to almost every regiment. Buell did not accompany him. In fact I never saw Buell, to know him. But General Rosecrans was visible almost every day he remained with the army. The official records show that at Louisville on September 29th, the command of this army was offered by the War Department to General George H. Thomas. He declined it, saying among other things in his letter to General Halleck, "General Buell's preparations have been completed to move against the enemy" (at Perryville), "and I therefore respectfully ask that he may be retained in command. My position is very embarrassing, not being as well informed as I should be as the commander of this army, and on the assumption of such responsibility."

On the strength of that dispatch, the secretary of war and General Halleck at that time commander-in-chief refused after the battle of Perryville to appoint him, although it was determined to remove Buell. Rosecrans was appointed because, as they said, Thomas had once refused, and they could not appoint him a second time. Why could they not have done so? Thomas had declined in the face of a battle only. There was nothing in his letter that could be construed other than a temporary embarrassment on his part at being invited to take command of the army on the eve of a battle, for in two days the army marched for that purpose. Thomas must have

taken it for granted from the wording of his dispatch that he was appealing to friends and companions at Washington who would appreciate and sympathize with his own feelings. But they were not sympathizing friends. They cared nothing for him, nor his feelings. They wanted him just then to supersede Buell because he was available. Afterwards when the battle had been fought, and practically lost, and there was ample time to look up some one else, they cared no more for General Thomas' real qualifications and feelings than they did for Buell. Afterwards when Rosecrans failed and General Thomas under him had greatly added to his own reputation, they were forced to give him command of that same army, largely upon the recommendation of Charles A. Dana, assistant secretary of war, based on what Thomas had done at Chickamauga. I have always thought that General Thomas made a great mistake in this declination, to which I refer in the chapter on him, not only for his own personal future, but more especially to the detriment of the army and the country. But the powers at Washington made a greater one when they refused to appoint him at Bowling Green. Had he promptly accepted at Louisville, and reorganized the army for the pending campaign, I think there is no doubt an entirely different battle would have been fought, not necessarily at Perryville. In the light of Thomas' subsequent history to the close of the war, it gives one the shivers now to think that Thomas was standing idly by without real command at Perryville, while McCook, Crittenden and Gilbert each was in command of a corps. J. J. Crittenden, Garrett Davis and R. Mallory,

old Kentuckians, and then civilians, made a written protest September 29, 1862, to the President against the removal of Buell. They were satisfied with the do-nothing policy. On the contrary, Governor Todd of Ohio, wrote Secretary Stanton under date of October 30th, "With one voice, so far as it has reached me, the army from Ohio demand the removal of General Buell." No wonder, after the war, General Buell settled down, and lived among his Kentucky friends.

General Rosecrans' letter to General Buell is as follows :

*" Galt House, Louisville, Kentucky,
" October, 30, 1862.*

" MAJOR-GENERAL D. C. BUELL,

" Galt House.

" GENERAL :

" Enclosed I transmit the authorized letter of General Halleck directing you on its presentation to turn over your present command to me and report at Indianapolis for orders. I know the bearer of unwelcome news has a 'losing office,' but feel assured you are too high a gentleman and too true a soldier to permit this to produce any feelings of personal unkindness between us. I, like yourself, am neither an intriguer nor a newspaper soldier. I go where I am ordered ; but propriety will permit me to say that I have often felt indignant at the petty attacks on you by a portion of the press, during the past summer, and that you had my high respect for ability as a soldier, for your firm adherence to truth and justice in the government and discipline of your command. I beg of you by our common profession, and the love we bear our common country, to give me all the aid you can for the performance of duties of which no one better than yourself, knows the difficulties. . . .

" Very truly and respectfully,

" Your obedient servant,

" W. S. ROSECRANS,

" Major-General."

General Grant had just been assigned to the command of the thirteenth corps in Mississippi. Our army at Bowling Green was then designated as the fourteenth corps. Sheridan was inconspicuously in command of a division in the army under Rosecrans. Sherman was with Grant in command of a division called the right wing of the thirteenth corps. Of the four great generals, Grant, Thomas, Sherman, and Sheridan, who in 1864, came to the top and finished the rebellion, none of them were very conspicuous in 1862. Halleck, Rosecrans and Burnside were in the saddle. McClelland was near the top. Grant, however, had attracted attention ever since Donaldson, and Thomas had just declined the command of the army of the Cumberland. McClellan and Pope had already gone down.

On November 10th the regiment left Bowling Green for Mitchellville, a station on the Louisville and Nashville railway, thirty-five miles north of Nashville. The long railroad tunnel here had been blown up by the rebels. Starkweather's brigade was stationed here from November 10th to December 7, 1862, as guard to the station and the immense quantity of supplies coming by rail from Louisville, and transported by wagon from here to Nashville. The brigade was composed of the First and Twenty-first Wisconsin, Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania, and Twenty-fourth Illinois, the same as at Perryville. The weather was now very cold. The country was level. The rains were frequent, and the mud deep. The responsibility was very great. The temptation to attack us and try to capture the large amount of federal stores was very strong to the enemy. A large and vigilant

picket was maintained day and night. In the coldest and foggiest hour of the day—just before daylight, the whole brigade was formed in line of battle every day to repel any possible attack. Pneumonia became very prevalent. Previous exposure and hardship, especially lying at night in all kinds of weather, without tents, had depleted the vitality of the men. The flag on the pole at headquarters was seen at half-mast and the solemn funeral march was heard almost daily. The quiet graves that billowed a secluded grove not far from the station for years, until they were removed to the national cemetery, told the havoc death made in the ranks. Among those who died here was Captain John Jewett, Jr., of D Company. Pneumonia was especially fatal to the Menominee Indians of the regiment. They did not stand this kind of exposure as well as white men.

I find the following letter written from this point ;

“ Mitchellville Station, Tennessee,

“ November 25, 1862.

“There is more of a prospect that we shall remain in camp for awhile than ever before. We are about one hundred and forty miles from Louisville and thirty-seven from Nashville, on the railroad between the two places. This is the present terminus of the constant shipment by rail from Louisville, and reshipment by wagon to the army now encamped around Nashville. There is no field officer with the regiment and I am in command. Every morning at five o'clock, we form line of battle and remain thus thirty minutes to guard against a surprise by the enemy. There is a great deal of sickness. In the last seven days, there have been seven deaths. A poor boy in the ranks died last night, having been sick only yesterday. We buried two day before yesterday and two more are lying dead now. . . .

Day after tomorrow will be Thanksgiving. The chaplain is planning a large chicken potpie for our mess. I am drilling in the manual of the knife and fork, in order to attack it in gallant style. The potpie will be flanked by potatoes and beans, with what preserved forces the sutler may have, closed in mass. I am commander of the attacking party, and have already called for reinforcements. Besides the chaplain who fights more with his tongue than his sword, the surgeon (Dr. J. T. Reeve) and his wife, who is now visiting him from Appleton, Wisconsin, who will charge one wing of the chicken, will make a very effective attacking force. Don't you think the victory will be ours? I have just read this plan of attack to the chaplain, and he approves highly of it."

On December 7th, the regiment left here for Nashville, and on the 9th joined the rest of Rousseau's division in Camp Andy Johnson, about five miles south of Nashville.

On December 17, 1862, at Camp Andy Johnson, at Nashville I wrote,

"The scenery is fine about Nashville. Upon most of the march through Kentucky, the country was very uninviting. So tired were we of the marches that everything pleasant was lost on the senses. Nashville appears to have been once a pleasant city. Now it is clogged by the war and has the appearance of all others cities surrounded by soldiers. I live in a tent on the ground now, whereas last winter on Arlington Heights on the Potomac, a nice cabin with board floor made camp life more endurable. This difference tells the story of the two armies. All days are alike to the army. Sundays often come and go without my knowledge, though, now I tent with the chaplain, he reminds me often of the approach of Sunday. Christmas and New Year's will be the same."

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF STONE RIVER

On December 26th, the regiment left Nashville for Stone River—Deflected at Stewartsboro to Jefferson—The fight with Wheeler's Cavalry at Jefferson—The inaccurate official reports of that affair—The regiment led by its adjutant saved the train.

WE remained in Camp Andy Johnson until December 26th. Christmas day was spent here, but the following morning at daylight, the army was on the road to Stone River, where Bragg was again lying in wait for us, entrenched. The movement began in a drenching rain. The distance was thirty miles. The Twenty-first Wisconsin then belonged to the third brigade, still commanded by Starkweather, first division under Rousseau, fourteenth army corps, as the whole army was then called. On the morning of the 30th, the army was in line of battle on Stone River, confronting Bragg's army. General Thomas, under whom we served, commanded what was called the centre, General A. McD. McCook, the right wing, and General T. T. Crittenden the left. The evening before, our brigade was detached from its division, and sent to our left on the road from Stewartsboro to Jefferson, a village lying eight miles northeast of the battle-field, where a bridge crosses Stone River. We were then on the left flank of the Union army, to protect it from the enemy's cavalry. It was after dark when the brigade

left Stewartsboro. The wagon train of the brigade, consisting of sixty-four wagons drawn, some by four and others by six mules each, was left back to follow up the next morning. The brigade arrived near Jefferson late in the night. After halting, each of the four regiments marched into an open field, by file right, stacked arms and bivouacked immediately behind the stands of arms. This movement brought each line of stacks a regiment's length from the other. We threw out pickets in a circle around the entire brigade for the night, and then slept soundly until morning on the ground.

In a small way, I have always felt satisfied with myself for the part I took in the fight next morning with Wheeler's cavalry, for the reason that the effect was visible in the saving of a large part of that train left back the night before at Stewartsboro. And also for the fact that while Colonel Hobart and General Starkweather did not approve of what I did, yet evidently on account of its success, they said nothing about it either to me or in their reports of the affair. This train had been put in the finest condition while we lay so long at Camp Johnson. The mules were sleek and fat, and the harness new. The wagon covers were new and white, glistening in the morning sun. As it wound over a hill about a mile and a half in rear of our bivouac that morning of the 30th, it was very conspicuous. I had just finished breakfast and walked out to the edge of the road. Lieutenant R. J. Weisbrod was near me and we were speaking admiringly of the fine sunshiny morning and the scenery, from our position. We saw the train coming over the hill. The entire camp equipage of the brigade, the commissary,

quartermaster and medical supplies were in that train, as well as the officers' baggage. About fifty invalids of our regiment were with it. It can then well be imagined that we not only watched its coming with admiration for its fine appearance, but also with much anxious, selfish interest in its well-being. The picket was about half a mile down the road towards the train. My standing in that particular spot at that hour in the morning was without any special object, although it happened to be at just the moment when the train began to appear in sight. At that time, our regiment was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Hobart, the only field officer present. To explain the action I took at that time, I will say that for some time after the battle of Perryville and before Colonel Hobart joined the regiment at Lebanon, Kentucky, I practically commanded the regiment in all its movements, although the senior captain was nominally in command. The officers and men of the regiment understood this and seemed to readily acquiesce. They obeyed all the orders I gave. While I am satisfied that the line officers never found any fault with what I did at this time, yet I was informed for the first time, twenty-five years after the war, that when it occurred, severe strictures were made upon it by others. Hence, this explanation, not by way of apology, for the result shows very conclusively that none is required.

Colonel Hobart, Chaplain O. P. Clinton, I think a medical officer, but which one I have forgotten and myself messed together, and had just finished breakfast in the open air at the left of the regiment near the road. The lieutenant-

colonel had mounted his horse and very properly ridden to the front to see what was there, and take observation generally upon our surroundings. This took him, however, in the opposite direction from the location of the pending trouble, while at the same time I happened to walk out to the road. The men were all near their stacks of arms in various positions and occupations. Some were standing, others sitting; some were sunning their blankets, others looking over their muskets, others cleaning up the breakfast dishes. Had a snap shot been made on them from a kodak, the picture would have shown the usual appearance of about four hundred soldiers in bivouac behind their arms, in no expectation of immediate trouble, but ready to obey in a moment any command from their recognized officers. Three regiments lay in the same manner in front of them and beyond sight—the Twenty-fourth Illinois, First Wisconsin Infantry, and the Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania—the nearest, a regiment's length away. The brigade headquarters were somewhere in the lines of the camp, but I had not yet ascertained where, but not in view from our position. While thus looking down the road, I noticed while the train was yet fully a mile away, a peculiar wabbling motion of the wagons, with a break here and there, in places, and general confusion. There was no mistaking such signs. I instinctively and instantly turned to the regiment and gave the command as loud and as distinct as I could, "Fall in!" While they were executing this I sent an orderly to brigade headquarters with the information that the train was attacked a mile away, and told the same orderly to try to find Colonel

Hobart and inform him. I buckled on my side arms, and then gave the commands in as quick succession as the men could execute them. "Take arms," "Shoulder arms," "Right shoulder shift arms," "Left face," "Double quick, file left march" (Casey's tactics were then in use), and away we went left in front down the pike towards that train at a fast double-quick. We soon passed the picket, and the first man of the train we met was Quartermaster Hamilton of our regiment coming, his horse on the run. A bullet had just been fired into his horse from behind. As he approached us he said, "I never was so glad to see anybody in my life." A few hundred yards farther on, we met the head of the train, the mules in a run and greatly distressed, while on each side of the train, rapidly gaining on the head wagon, was a line of detached Confederate cavalry, pistols in hand, firing and hallooing to the drivers to stop. Our regiment was in two ranks, and when we reached the head wagon, we opened out, allowing the train to come between, but kept on the double-quick until we came to the rear of the train, the Confederate cavalry falling back as we advanced. We then halted, formed across the road and commenced firing at a lot of Confederate cavalry immediately in our front who were apparently preparing to charge our line.

The train went on into camp (what was left of it), and we soon discovered that the woods a few hundred yards in front of us was apparently full of Confederate cavalry, and that we would have our hands full to hold alone the advanced position we had taken. At this time, Colonel Hobart rode

up very rapidly and took command. But the train was already saved, whatever might become of us, for we stood there between it and danger, and before that rebel force could break through our line, the balance of the brigade could be in line in front of the train.

Perhaps a hundred yards to the right of where we formed across the road was a sharp rise of ground, on top of which was a log schoolhouse surrounded by a good rail fence. Seeing that the enemy greatly outnumbered our regiment, and that in case they advanced on us in force, our position was untenable, I suggested to Colonel Hobart that he take position with the regiment at the schoolhouse, behind the fence, which he very promptly did. The firing on both sides was now brisk at long range, but the enemy evidently was not there for a fight, and did not seriously charge, but held his position in the woods. Two pieces of artillery from Stone's Kentucky battery were eventually brought up to the position and the woods shelled. I remember that I was very anxious for the other regiments to come up, so we could advance and retake the wagons which the enemy had captured before we advanced, and were then burning in the woods behind their lines. Many a glance did I cast back towards camp, and after what seemed to me a very long time—perhaps half an hour or less after the opening of the fight—I did see two regiments in line of battle, the First Wisconsin and the Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania, both gallant and brave, with flags flying and alignments well kept, not double-quicking, but marching to the front through the fields, on the left of the road with skirmishers thrown out.

Before, however, they reached the advanced line occupied by the Twenty-first Wisconsin, the rebels had disappeared and the affair was over. The three regiments were then advanced until the burning wagons were found. The mules, perhaps one hundred and twenty-five or thirty in number, were all gone, the contents of the wagons rifled, and the invalids captured, taken back and paroled. Twenty wagons had been captured, but the quick movement of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, without the presence of a field officer, and without the order or knowledge of the brigade commander, saved forty-four wagons.

These are the facts of "the affair of Jefferson Pike." But what do the official records say? The twentieth volume of the "Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies" contains the report of the battle of Stone River or Mufreesboro, including this affair. There is no report from the Twenty-first Wisconsin; and I will say that as long as Starkweather commanded the brigade, no regimental report was filed at the War Department. The reports of the other two brigade commanders of this division, of the part they took in the battle of Stone River are published in the same volume, and are both followed by those of their regimental commanders. The first regimental report of the Twenty-first Wisconsin which appears in the records is that of the Atlanta campaign in 1864, and that appears in volume thirty-eight. This is what Starkweather says of the affair in his report (see page 391, part 1, volume 20):

"The head of the train had just arrived in camp and while in the process of being parked, the rear of the same

was attacked by a portion of Wheeler's cavalry brigade; while the remainder of the brigade, he being in command, as also a part of a brigade under Colonel Allen, advanced on both sides of the highway for the purpose of attacking the brigade force and destroying the whole train. The outposts and pickets, being, however, on the alert, met the enemy at the front and held them in check until the brigade was formed and ready for battle." (This is not according to my version given above.) "I immediately ordered the train at double-quick to be parked; ordered the Twenty-first Wisconsin, under Colonel Hobart to the front and rear of train." (It went without orders but not under Hobart.) "Ordered the First Wisconsin to deploy right and left from centre, as skirmishers and to press forward. . . . My advance, the Twenty-first Wisconsin, was soon hotly engaged; being pressed severely by the enemy in front and on the left, they passed to the right of the highway and occupied a hill upon which was a log house, giving them a good position."

After further giving the disposition made of the artillery, fifty cavalymen of the Second Kentucky, the First Wisconsin and the Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania, he further says:

"The enemy was, however, finally repulsed and left the field after severe fighting, the engagement lasting two hours and ten minutes, the brigade following one and one-half miles when deeming my rear unsafe" (he had left the Twenty-fourth Illinois there), "I ordered the command to retire and went into camp near Jefferson."

After giving an estimate of the forces and casualties on each side, he further says :

“The troops under my command acted with great coolness and bravery, no flinching, no running, but the utmost coolness shown by all, adding another creditable mark to the old twenty-eighth brigade. . . . Staff officers and orderlies carried orders fearlessly to different parts of the field,” etc., etc.

Comment is unnecessary on this report. But no credit is given to the twenty-first for promptly moving without orders and thus saving the forty-four wagons. General Rousseau, who was not present in the fight, in his report on pages 378 and 379 of same volume, thus refers to the action :

“The twenty-eighth brigade, Colonel John C. Starkweather commanding, and Stone’s battery of the First Kentucky Artillery were at Jefferson Crossing on Stone River about eight miles below.” In another part of the report he says, “During the day, the twenty-eighth brigade, Colonel Starkweather, was attacked by Wheeler’s cavalry in force and some of the wagons of his train were burned before they reached him, having started that morning (December 30th) from Stewartsboro to join him. The enemy was finally repulsed and driven off with loss. Starkweather’s loss was small, as will be seen by his report of the action. In this affair, the whole brigade behaved handsomely. The burden of the fight fell upon the Twenty-first Wisconsin, Lieutenant-Colonel Hobart commanding. This regiment *led by its efficient commander*, behaved like

veterans." He evidently had received Hobart's verbal report.

General George H. Thomas, commanding the fourteenth corps, in his report, same volume, page 372, says: "December 30th, a cavalry force of the enemy, something over four hundred strong, with two pieces of artillery attacked Starkweather about 9 A. M., but was driven off."

The report of General Wheeler who commanded the Confederate cavalry is given on page 958 of same volume. He begins his report by saying that his command consisted of the following cavalry regiments: 'The First, Third, and Fifty-first Alabama, the latter commanded by Colonel John T. Morgan, after the war, United States senator from Alabama; the Eighth Confederate, two Tennessee battalions, and Captain Wiggins' battery, being six regiments and one battery. Further on he says:

"By evening of the 29th (December), we had reached the line of battle of our infantry" (meaning that he had been driven back from Stewart's Creek since the 26th) "and had placed my brigade on the extreme right of the line. At midnight, pursuant to orders from General Bragg, I proceeded with my command reinforced by Colonel Carter's regiment" (not Allen's) "to the enemy's rear. By daylight on the 30th, we had reached Jefferson and soon after met a train with all the equipage of one brigade. We attacked vigorously, drove off the guards and destroyed the train, baggage, equipage, etc." (he should have said one-third of the train), "also captured about fifty prisoners." It can readily be seen by this report, that Wheeler's

force was much larger than General Thomas puts it in his report.

In another report on page 960, dated January 29, 1863, General Wheeler says, "At midnight on the 29th ult., I proceeded with the command across the west fork of the Stone River by way of Lebanon road, thence by a circuitous route to Jefferson, where about 9 A. M., on the 30th, we attacked, captured and destroyed an entire brigade train."

Such is the official but false history of the engagement. Wheeler, when he retired from this attack went across the rear of our army, capturing what he could. He avoided fighting as much as possible. The only thing we could do was to save as much of our train as possible. That was accomplished by the opportune movement of the twenty-first. Had we waited before moving against the enemy, for the return of Colonel Hobart, or orders from the brigade commander, the whole train would have been captured and destroyed before we could have driven the enemy away. So it never occurred to me that I had done other than the right thing until twenty-five years after the close of the war, and before the publication of the official reports heretofore quoted. At that time I was ignorant of the official reports from which I quote. I was told by General Starkweather, in Washington, D. C., that I had no right to take the Twenty-first Wisconsin down the pike on that morning.

Technically, of course, an adjutant cannot command a regiment, but when the enemy attacks and there is no one to give a command, and he thus in defiance of army regulations saves perhaps, \$100,000 worth of property and

brings upon his regiment honorable mention by brigade and division commanders in their reports, although they do pervert the facts of the attack, is it quite fair that he should be entirely unmentioned in the matter, and a false coloring given to the official history of it? The adjutant, however, was not entirely without honor in the matter in his own regiment, for while on picket a few nights after this, he overheard a sergeant of Company B, whose name I have forgotten, and some enlisted men, talking the matter over, when they supposed he was asleep near by. The sergeant was congratulating himself to the men, that in the rapid advance down the Jefferson Pike on that morning, he was able to keep to the front, by the side of the adjutant who set the pace. This conversation was in the presence of Colonel Hobart.

The great credit, however, should be given to the brave soldiers of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, who had been mustered into service less than four months before, who did not hesitate to perform a hazardous service, even when commanded by an inferior officer. They would have been justified in standing still and disobeying the order, much to the gratification of some high officers; but in that case, the train would have been lost, and Wheeler's cavalry could have attacked us in camp.

I heartily wish I could mention the names of the officers and men who were most conspicuously to the front in this affair. I remember, however, that all did bravely. Captain Van Valkenburg, who was then sergeant-major, received a spent ball on his blanket, which was folded over his shoulders.

Starkweather's report was based on what he saw. He did not see the twenty-first move out of camp and down the pike. When he first took in the situation, the head of the train very likely, was just coming into camp. But this was long after the twenty-first had driven off the rebel cavalymen from the train and formed across the road. He told me that Hobart had ridden up to him in camp saying, "That d——d adjutant has run away with my regiment." Starkweather said that he replied, "You would better run after it." However, Hobart never mentioned the affair to me, and Starkweather did not, until I mentioned it to him in 1888, at Washington, when he replied that I had no right to take the regiment in the way I did.

He never seemed to appreciate that my taking the responsibility saved two-thirds of the train. But as the reports gave the credit to him and Hobart, I was not court-martialed. His report does not tell the true beginning, nor the proper succession of events. I could make no official report of the matter. The lieutenant-colonel apparently never made any, except verbally perhaps, to Rousseau, who ignoring Starkweather's report stated what Hobart had told him, that the burden of the fight fell on the twenty-first. Rousseau and Hobart were friends. Rousseau's report, while very short, more nearly states the entire transaction than Starkweather's. He says, however, that in the fighting, the twenty-first was led by Hobart. Well! it would have been rough on Hobart to say that he was present in the brigade, and did not lead his regiment.

CHAPTER IX

BATTLE OF STONE RIVER (*Continued*)

The brigade all day of the 31st of December going eight miles towards the battle—A short general account of the battle—A Union soldier mistaken for a rebel prisoner—Living on horse meat and parched corn—How two Union men were killed by solid rifled artillery-shot—Description of Breckenridge's famous attack and repulse on the Union left—Stone River, one of the great battles in losses on both sides and a technical victory for the Union army.

THE battle of Stone River, so far as the Twenty-first Wisconsin was concerned, began on the 30th of December, 1862, with this affair on Jefferson Pike. While we were fighting the rebel cavalry that morning in defense of our transportation, the rest of the first division of the fourteenth corps, under command of General Rousseau, was moving from Stewartsboro where our brigade had left it on the evening of the 29th of December. It consisted then of three brigades, commanded by Scribner, John Beatty, and the regular brigade under Major Oliver L. Sheperd. They moved along the main pike, leading into Murfreesboro, and that night bivouacked on the main battle-field, where the next day they fought a most desperate engagement, while our brigade was very slowly groping its way in a zigzag fashion across the country to join them. On page 276 of part 2, volume 20 of the "Rebellion Record" there is a dispatch from Rosecrans to Thomas, dated 11 A. M., December 30th, saying, "Firing heard in the direction of Jefferson." On the

next page is another dispatch directing Thomas to have Starkweather's brigade join the main army at 8 A. M., December 31st. It could easily have done so, for it was only eight miles away. Starkweather must have received that order during the night of the 30th, and we did move out of camp early on the morning on the 31st. But in his very short report on page 393, part 1, volume 20, Starkweather says the brigade arrived on the battle-field at 5 P. M., December 31st. He does not say when he started from Jefferson, nor why it took all day to march eight miles, while a desperate battle was being fought by our comrades—of which fact we very early became cognizant, after leaving our camp at Jefferson. Wounded and stragglers began to pass us early in the forenoon who reported the commencement of the battle.

The historical account of the battle of Stone River is too familiar to require more than a passing glance. It can be found in numerous other books. The union army commanded by General Rosecrans was drawn up in line, within three miles of Murfreesboro, facing the rebel army under General Bragg. At that time the army was called the fourteenth corps, but was divided into three wings. McCook held the right, Thomas the centre, and Crittenden the left. The latter extended across Stone River, which here ran almost due north for a short distance, after running nearly east in front of the right of our army. Bragg concentrated and attacked McCook's right at daylight, December 31st, drove his divisions, first Johnson's then Davis' and then Sheridan's back upon Thomas, until the Union right

was formed at nearly right angles with Thomas' centre. Here Rousseau had formed the regulars and Beatty's brigade in the front line, with Scribner in reserve. The severest fighting in that division fell to the regulars, who lost in killed and wounded, more than both the other brigades; but they also lost heavily. When our brigade arrived, the battle, so far as Rousseau's division was concerned, was over for that day. Many details of that march from Jefferson are not vivid in my mind; but I will never forget the gloomy aspect of the battle-field, and of the army lying then on its arms when we arrived in the twilight of that winter's evening, and went into bivouac on the out-cropping limestone in the cedar woods, on the left of the Nashville pike. The armies lay facing each other, like two worn-out gladiators, tired, muddy and bloody. An artillery shot was fired occasionally and as we approached the field from the rear, we could plainly see on the right, our cavalry drawn up in the open field and charging the rebel line, to prevent its gaining the pike in our rear. Our dead and wounded were mostly in possession of the enemy. The right of our army then lay very nearly in the shape of half a horseshoe, its back to the main pike and the railroad which here ran close to, and parallel with the pike. We marched up the pike in rear of this wing, to the most advanced position, where the centre and right wing joined at almost a right angle. The command of General Thomas, consisting of Rousseau's, Negley's and a detached brigade of another division occupied the key to the field. The left stretched across the river in its original position.

The first night we went on picket at the position of the Board of Trade battery of Chicago. It was raining and cold. The ground was very muddy. Pools of water stood in the hollow places. After the details were made and the front pickets posted, Colonel Hobart and I succeeded in getting a lot of cedar boughs to make a bed of. At the head of our field bed, was a small pine or cedar bush with a fork in it, just the right height for the head to rest in comfortably. Before we lay down, some of the pickets brought in a supposed prisoner who apparently had wandered into our lines. Colonel Hobart and Colonel Humphrey of the Eighty-eighth Indiana took charge of him and tried to get him to talk, but he could not speak a word of English. They went off with him, and I lay down and went to sleep, first putting my head into the fork of that shrub. When I awoke in the morning, Hobart was lying by my side. He insisted that he had gone to sleep with his head in the fork of that cedar and that during the night, I must by some "hocus-pocus," have lifted his head out and put mine in. Said I, "Hobart, what did you do with that prisoner, and when did you go to bed?" He related the following adventure: "Colonel Humphrey and I had a very amusing experience. We took that prisoner, first to brigade headquarters, and had him examined by General Starkweather; then to division headquarters where Rousseau tried to find out from him where he came from, but he could not; then we went to General Thomas with him. The general looked him over and asked him a few questions, and called in Colonel Von Schroeder to talk German to him. His German was

incomprehensible to Von Schroeder. Finally General Thomas with his usual sagacity said, 'Turn him loose, follow him and see where he goes.' We followed him in a devious walk of more than an hour among the camps. He finally approached a camp-fire in the bivouac of the Eighth Missouri Infantry. There were several soldiers sitting around the fire. Two or three of them jumped up on seeing the supposed rebel prisoner and shouted, 'Yacob, where the h——I have you been?' Colonel Humphrey and I looked in each other's faces, laughed and without saying a word, turned around without even going through the ceremony of bidding the prisoner good-bye, and strode through the mud to our respective regiments, wiser but sadder and wetter than we were earlier in the evening. I retired soon after midnight." "Well," said I, "that accounts for the hallucination you are now laboring under that your head was ever in peaceful slumber in the fork of that tree. Any one who would mistake a Union soldier for a rebel prisoner, and had visited three different headquarters to find out what should have been apparent at first, staying an hour at each enjoying its well-known hospitality on a wet cold night, was not likely to be in condition to know whether he got his feet or his head in the fork of a tree."

About daylight, the regiment was relieved from the front, and moved back into the edge of the woods to get coffee and breakfast. Rations were scarce; but Jasper, my colored servant, had a fire at the foot of a large hollow oak-tree and soon had a tempting meal of coffee, meat and bread. Colonel Hobart ate quite heartily of the meat and pronounced it

good beefsteak. Jasper looked at me and smiled, because I knew what it was. It was a piece of Fred Starkweather's horse—a black one at that. A solid shot had struck it on the leg the day before, taking the foot off at the fetlock joint. The boys of the Twenty-fourth Illinois, Colonel Mehilotzy's German regiment, killed the horse and cut him up into slices that looked like beefsteak. The evening before, Hobart had been offered some as horse steak, and could not be induced to touch it, but in the morning, being hungry, he was offered some as beefsteak. He forgot that no other meat was procurable. I think Chaplain Clinton was in the mess, and knew what the meat was. However, a year or two later, Hobart got revenge on the chaplain, who was a great temperance advocate and always boasted that he had never tasted liquor. The colonel who seemed to be annoyed by the temperance talk of the chaplain, bought a can of concentrated milk punch at the sutler's and had Jasper put it on the table, as concentrated milk for the coffee. The chaplain put a spoonful in his coffee, tasted it, and pronounced it sour. "I guess not," said Hobart, "try some more and see." The chaplain tried it again, but could not drink it. Hobart then told the chaplain that his boasting that he had never tasted liquor was at an end, for he had just drank some rum punch.

While we were lying thus in the woods, Rosecrans and his staff passed near. At that moment a handsome young man in the uniform of a lieutenant of the staff rode rapidly up to the general and announced that the rebel line was approaching on the right. The general looked at him a

moment, then said, "Go over there, and tell our men to give them blizzard." In a few minutes the line did give them "blizzard," and in all the attacks made from that time until the retreat of the rebel force, no impression was made on the compact, perfect horseshoe formation of the Union line. On January 1st, there was some fighting of a desultory character. Our brigade was placed in the toe of the horseshoe on the right of, and close to the Nashville pike. This seemed to be the centre and key of the position. The enemy had a battery pointing down this pike. Its three-inch solid shots would strike the hard macadamized surface and ricochet for a hundred or more yards. I saw two men struck with these long-pointed shot after the ricochet. One of them struck a soldier on his right arm, between the elbow and shoulder. He was standing with his right side to the battery. It passed through both arms and his body, leaving each arm hanging by two shreds of flesh.

The other man had just been relieved from the front and was walking to the rear, in the middle of the pike with his full equipments on him. The shot first struck the pike a long distance in his rear, hit him squarely in the middle of his knapsack, and made a perfectly round hole through that and his chest. It lifted him from the ground, and he fell on his face more than twenty feet away. I ran to him and found that the concussion of the shot in his back, half way between the shoulders, had thrown both arms out of their sockets, at the shoulder, and they were hanging by their tendons. So instantly were these men killed, that they must

have been unconscious of the cause. These are merely two incidents of the horrors of battle.

The next day, January 2, 1863, the famous attack of Breckinridge's division of seven thousand, was made upon the left of our army, across Stone River to the left of our position. At four o'clock P. M., a double line of gray skirmishers could be seen moving out of the woods into the open field in front of Van Cleve's position, a division of Crittenden's wing. These were soon followed by two lines of battle, with glistening muskets at right shoulder shift. They marched in splendid order across the open field and were soon met by the fire of Van Cleve's division directly in the front. But Van Cleve had no artillery on that side of the river. We had plenty, however, on our side. As soon as Breckinridge's line had become engaged with Van Cleve's troops, it was seen that their left flank was exposed to our fire. This gave our artillery their opportunity. Two or three batteries went flying from our line, took position along the higher ground of the left bank of the river, and poured shot and shell into their exposed left flank. Other infantry troops were hurried across the ford in support of Van Cleve. The firing from both infantry and artillery was terrific for a short time. Then the rebel line gave way and melted back into the woods whence it came, leaving two thousand dead, wounded and prisoners in our hands. Breckinridge says in his report that he lost about seventeen hundred. This ended the heavy fighting. A heavy rain fell all the next day. The losses were light in our brigade, yet Rousseau says in his report :

“From the evening of the 31st until the ensuing Saturday night, no general battle occurred in front of my division, though firing of artillery and small arms was kept up during the day, and much of the time during the night. The rain on the night of the 31st, which continued at intervals until the Saturday night following, rendered the ground exceedingly sloppy and muddy, and during much of the time, my men had neither shelter, food nor fire. I procured corn, which they parched and ate, and some ate the horse steaks cut and broiled from the horses upon the battlefield. Day and night, in the cold, wet, and mud, my men suffered severely, but during the time I did not hear a single man murmur, but all were cheerful and ever ready to stand by their arms and fight. Such endurance I never saw before. In this severe trial of their patience and strength they were much encouraged by the constant presence and solicitous anxiety of General Thomas for their welfare.”

Starkweather's brigade was then still composed of the First and Twenty-first Wisconsin, Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania, and Twenty-fourth Illinois. Scribner's and Beatty's were composed of the following regiments, with whom we were afterwards brigaded on the Atlanta campaign and the march to the sea, the Thirty-eighth, Forty-second and Eighty-eighth Indiana, Second, Thirty-third and Ninety-fourth Ohio, Tenth Wisconsin and Fifteenth Kentucky.

On the night of Saturday, January 3, 1863, the rebels retreated and left the Union army in possession of the field. This gave the technical victory to the Union side.

In killed and wounded, on our side, it was the third

largest battle fought in the west—Chickamauga and Shiloh, alone being greater in Union losses. Looking upon it in the light of later battles, especially those around Chattanooga and on the Atlanta campaign, we can now see how crude we were, and how little we then knew how to fight battles. The twenty-first had been less than four months in the service. We were not skilled nor disciplined. Officers and soldiers, as a rule, were brave and willing enough, but the army seemed too unwieldy and lacking in efficient staff service. We were only thirty miles from our base at Nashville, and yet were without sufficient rations, which to an army is of more importance than ammunition. We seemed greatly lacking in the cavalry arm, in which the enemy outnumbered us, two to one; otherwise our brigade of infantry should not have gone to Jefferson. That was the post of the cavalry. Yet with all these drawbacks, the field was won against about an equal number on the opposite side, and as the end proves the means, we should be content.

To the Twenty-first Wisconsin in the battle of Stone River, there was no such storm of bullets as flew round and through us at Perryville, but that constant bursting of shells, and solid shot, and the whiz of the sharpshooter's rifle lasting so many days, were tiresome. We were without tents or baggage, as we were at Perryville, for eight or nine days. I wore a poncho and a butternut rebel blanket for several days in the rain. I could lie down anywhere in the rain and go to sleep, under artillery fire.

Later on in the service, when transportation was greatly reduced, when fine clothes and dress parades were largely

tabooed, when inefficiency, pomposity, idleness, stupidity and alarmists were replaced by discipline, earnestness, patient industry, and attention to those things only that would bring success, victory perched upon our banners, without the necessity of living on parched corn and horse steak.

CHAPTER X

FROM STONE RIVER TO DUG GAP

The army encamped around Murfreesboro—The camp made beautiful and the men comfortable—Officers' wives came down from the north—Fortress Rosecrans built—The mocking-bird a native of Tennessee—Literature in camp—Expedition to McMinnville—The author commissioned Major and detached as Division Inspector—The army reorganized—The duties of the Inspector's Department—The personnel of General Rousseau's staff—Rebels hung and deserter shot—The Tullahoma campaign began June 24th—Engagement at Hoover's Gap—General Rousseau goes north and General Baird assigned to command the division.

THE army entered Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on January 5, 1863. It was a beautiful little city of about seven thousand inhabitants. The country around it is very flat, and the frequent rains of January and February made the camp of the army very unhealthy. Forage was scarce. Large foraging parties had constantly to be sent out over terrible roads. The duties here of the rank and file, at first, while winter lasted, were therefore, hard and tedious. But when spring opened and there was no movement made upon the enemy, the railway to Louisville having been put in good order, supplies became plentiful. The life that before hung heavily, became joyous and light. The different camps were beautifully decorated. Reviews and dress parades, with music and gold lace were constant. Ladies frequently visited the camp. The army was largely made up of Ohio, Indiana,

Illinois and Kentucky troops. Many wives of officers from these states visited their husbands. The distance from their homes was not great. Fortress Rosecrans, a large earth-work was thrown up on both sides of Stone River between the battle-field and Murfreesboro. By means of this fortress, General Rousseau was enabled afterwards in December, 1864, to hold Murfreesboro with about eight thousand troops against the army of Hood. The mocking-bird is at home in this state. One day I sat on my horse under the shade of a tree and for many minutes drank in the rapturous notes of one. When sleeping on the picket line we were awakened in the morning amid the music of a great variety of bird warblers, but all combined, could not compare in sweetness, clearness, nor variety of note to the mocking-bird. It is the prima donna of feathered songsters.

When in camp, I tented with the chaplain, Rev. O. P. Clinton. He was the best and most genial of companions. In some way we had some books. I always carried a few in my baggage. I remember a small volume of Longfellow and one of Whittier. A copy of Goldsmith appeared in our tent here. In the interim of duties, it was delightful to read the "Vicar of Wakefield," "Deserted Village," and "Retaliation." The latter is exquisite in its wit and satire. As his friends, who perhaps had said of him, "He never wrote a foolish thing, and never said a wise one," at the close of a dinner lay under the table, he wrote each one's epitaph in amusing rhyme. I borrowed also, a copy of Milton's "Paradise Lost," and Leigh Hunt's "Indicator." The latter is a miscellaneous idle-hour book. It is named

after the *Cuculus Indicator* of Linnæus. This bird is indigenous to Central Africa. When a bee hunter hears its cry, he may answer it in bird notes. When the bird finds it is recognized, presumably by its mate, it hovers over the tree containing the honey, thus indicating to his mate, as he supposes, where the honey can be found. It is a singular title for a book of essays. Our leisure time thus passed very swiftly and pleasantly.

Early in February, 1863, I was taken with typhoid fever, and lay in a house in Murfreesboro for ten or more days. The chaplain, and Dr. S. L. Fuller, one of our assistant surgeons, looked carefully after me. C. B. Clark, who was then an enlisted man in Company I was my attendant. After the war, he was a successful paper manufacturer at Neenah, Wisconsin, and became wealthy and a member of Congress. With such care, I soon recovered and was back to duty. But for some days I was very sick.

Some time in March, Colonel B. J. Sweet visited the regiment. His right arm was perfectly stiff at the elbow, from his wound. He had been assigned to duty as commandant of a fort at Gallatin, Tennessee. I had not seen him since the battle of Perryville. Our meeting was very joyful. A short time after this visit, his wound broke out afresh, and he had to return to Louisville for treatment.

I notice in a letter written home on April 7, 1863, I used the following language :

“I receive encouraging letters from my partner, A. H. Young, at Prescott. I have nothing to vex me particularly except the continuance of the rebellion. Copperheads, I

notice, are in bad odor at the north, but yet, do you know that the rebels have said meaner things about them than the people at the north?"

A. H. Young, after the war, moved to Minneapolis, where for several terms, he was district judge.

April 20th our brigade made part of an expedition to McMinnville and Liberty under General J. J. Reynolds. The infantry was in the nature of a support to the cavalry. My memorandum, made at Murfreesboro, April 30th, says:

"Just returned from an expedition of ten days to the front. Went to McMinnville, took some prisoners, burnt a large portion of the town and cut the railroad communication. Our advance cavalry came very suddenly upon John H. Morgan. He and a leader, named 'Dick Martin,' tried to escape together. Morgan escaped, but General Reynolds, in his official report says that Lieutenant-Colonel R. M. Martin was mortally wounded by a sabre in the hand of a member of the Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry. I enjoyed the outing very much. We came near the slope of the Cumberland Mountains. The scenery was very grand. From the summit of Snow Hill, it is two and one-half miles by the road, to the valley below. We came in rear of this hill and drove the enemy before us. So sudden was our appearance that they destroyed their equipage and fled, every man for himself. About two hundred prisoners were captured."

General Reynolds in his official report of this says, "The inhabitants may be divided into three classes. First, the wealthy; second, those of moderate means, or well-to-do; third, the poor," etc., etc. See page 269, part 1, volume 23, "Rebellion Reports" for this very interesting analysis of the classes.

As my mind recalls the experiences of the winter of

1862-3, beginning at Mitchellville, Tennessee, where we lay so long in wet, muddy and swampy camps, and where we lost so many men by that deadly disease, pneumonia; our life at Camp Johnson near Nashville where Merry Christmas was spent, and followed so closely the day after by a miserable march in rain and mud via Nolensville to Stewartsboro; the sunshiny camp at Jefferson, and the attack of Wheeler's cavalry on our trains, and his glorious repulse on December 30th; the horrible scenes of the battle of Stone River, followed by the long and restful camp at Murfreesboro, I recall also the sturdy, healthful faces and forms the men put on when the trees began to bloom and the mocking-birds commenced their inimitable songs in those beautiful groves about that little Tennessee city.

We lay in this camp nearly six months, drilling, recruiting, going on an occasional march to capture some rebel force, that was not captured, and gladly marching back again to the peaceful quarters, so cozy and bright with new tents and well policed streets.

It was in this camp I was commissioned major to succeed the lamented Schumacher, who was killed in the battle of Perryville. My rank as major began, according to the wording of the commission, December 19, 1862. I cannot imagine why that particular date was selected. If the commission was to date back at all, why not to the date of Schumacher's death, October 8, 1862. The reception of this commission rather surprised me, for I had lost hope of getting it. There were seven line officers in the regiment who ranked me. They had been doing all they could to

defeat my prospects, aided by some officers of still higher rank. Colonel Sweet triumphed over all of them. He placed on file in the executive office at Madison, Wisconsin, testimonials of my character and fitness, that I am afraid were beyond the strict construction of my constitution. He did that when he was unable to write, but dictated to an amanuensis. Without his friendship and disinterested zeal, I am free to say, that it is very probable my rank in the service would not have risen above that of first lieutenant.

The army was practically reorganized here at Murfreesboro. Before that time, brigades had been numbered successively. Ours was the twenty-eighth and belonged to Rousseau's division. But here the Army of the Cumberland was divided into three corps, the fourteenth, twentieth and twenty-first. Each division was numbered within the corps and each brigade within its division. Certain staff corps were reorganized and enlarged, notably the Inspector's department.

I happened to have two or three friends on Rousseau's staff, one of whom was first lieutenant, William R. Lowe, ordnance officer, who was taken from the line of the Nineteenth United States Infantry. He came from the county in which my family lived, in Ohio. His father before him was a soldier in both the Mexican and Civil Wars, and was killed in 1861 in the battle of Carnifex Ferry, in Virginia, as colonel of the Twelfth Ohio. So it happened that when General Rosecrans sent down to General Rousseau's headquarters at Murfreesboro, an order for some officer with the rank of major to be recommended for the position of in-

spector of the first division, Lieutenant Lowe mentioned my name to General Rousseau, and without my having known anything about it, I one day received the following order, which took me upon detached duty :

*“ Headquarters, 14th Army Corps,
“ May 30, 1863.*

“ GENERAL ORDER

“ NO 17.

“ EXTRACT.

“ In pursuance of General Order No. 99, May 3, 1863, from Department Headquarters, the following named officers having been approved by the Department Commander, are hereby appointed Division and Brigade Inspectors for first, second, third and fifth divisions.

“ First Division, Major M. H. Fitch, 21st Wis. Vols. Division Inspector.

“ By command of

“ MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS.

“ (Signed) GEORGE E. FLYNT,

“ A. A. G. and Chief of Staff.”

The corps of inspectors consisted of a chief at the headquarters of the army, an assistant inspector general of each corps, and an inspector of each division and brigade. Daily reports were made by the brigade inspector through the division inspector of the condition of the camps and men ; condemnation of worn-out and useless ordnance and property of all kinds was a function of this office. A very important duty was to see that the pickets were properly placed, and a competent line maintained around the army. This brought me every day on the picket line of the division. An inspector was not on the personal staff of the general, I usually did whatever was customary in carrying

orders, but not until the aides had been first called, and as at the battle of Chickamauga, when all the aides and other members of the staff had been sent with orders to other parts of the field, I was frequently alone with the general.

General Rousseau had his headquarters at Murfreesboro, in a brick house near the lines of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, though the quarters of most of his staff were outside in tents.

The division was composed of three brigades, two of them volunteer and one regular. The regular brigade was commanded by General John H. King, and his adjutant general was Captain James W. Forsythe who was retired not long ago, as major-general of the regular army. This brigade was especially interesting because it was regular, and most of its officers were graduates of West Point. The band of the Fifteenth United States Infantry played at division headquarters almost every evening and its music was charming. Almost every week, the division drilled. Companies and regiments were drilled every day. All the officers and men kept well dressed, and were inspected every Sunday morning. The camps were regularly laid out and kept scrupulously clean. The sanitary conditions were closely looked after. Fine hospitals were established.

Of General Rousseau's staff, I readily recall Major William P. McDowell, assistant adjutant-general. He, like Rousseau, was a Kentuckian. Dr. Solon Marks was medical director of the division. He was No. 1 in his department, and has been since the war, a leading surgeon and

physician in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Genial Captain Thomas C. Williams was later one of the aides. He belonged to the Nineteenth United States Infantry, was tall, graceful and a very fine officer. Lieutenant John L. Mitchell of the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin Infantry, was an aide and a very efficient and brave officer. He was after the war a United States senator from Wisconsin, and was a very wealthy, leading citizen. I have spoken above of Major William R. Lowe. Harrison Millard, the musical composer was the mustering officer. Later on, the celebrated tragedian, James E. Murdock, was volunteer aide in citizen's dress. He was a fine wit and conversationalist. He gave us readings and recitations frequently. Captain R. E. A. Crofton, late colonel of the Fifteenth United States Infantry, and commander at Fort Sheridan, was then a captain in the Sixteenth United States Infantry in King's brigade. He was an exceedingly agreeable gentleman. These officers made up a society at headquarters that was very attractive.

One night in June, 1863, General Rousseau gave an entertainment at his headquarters to the officers. The generals of the whole army, and nearly all the field officers attended. I remember seeing George D. Prentice of the *Louisville Journal* there. A few nights afterwards, General James S. Negley, whose division was encamped to our right gave a similar entertainment. Thus the time passed very pleasantly until the 24th of June when the army broke camp and moved forward on what is dignified by the name of the Tullahoma campaign.

While we lay in this camp at Murfreesboro, I remember three men were hung near our camp. They were citizens who were murderers, and had been condemned by military court. On June 5th, a rebel who had tortured and slowly murdered a Union man, being convicted by a court martial, was hung in the presence of the army. The daughter of the murdered man was present. As the drop fell and his body went down like a flash, she clapped her hands. A recaptured deserter was shot by our division. The division was formed on three sides of him, as he sat on his coffin. The detail shot him, firing towards the fourth, and open side of the square. General Rousseau and his staff sat on their horses some distance behind the detail, and I remember we saw him fall dead quite a little while before we heard the sound of the firing. Light travels so much faster than sound.

On June 15th, I wrote, "How busy I am every hour, and have been since coming on staff duty. It is now nine at night, and oh! how tired I am! Been out in the hot sun all the afternoon on division drill, after writing and inspecting all the forenoon. I inspect a picket line a mile long every morning before breakfast, but that is only a nice ride. The position of inspector is very independent, and a very pleasant one; laborious indeed, but furnishing sufficient variety to make up for want of leisure. General Rousseau is a fine gallant officer, and now sports his two stars. The staff officers are agreeable and interesting. Just in front of our headquarters, a stand has been erected and every morning and evening, the sweetest music fills the air from some one of the many bands in the division."

There was a very long delay in moving upon the enemy.

Secretary Stanton had some racy correspondence with Rosecrans about this inactivity. General Garfield, chief of staff to Rosecrans was anxious to move. He took pains to ascertain the views of the general officers of the army with reference to this delay. Rosecrans was supported by most of the other generals, including General Thomas. The letters and reports, pro and con, are very interesting, and can be found in part 2, volume 23, "Rebellion Record."

General Rousseau's official report of the Tullahoma campaign will sufficiently indicate the march from Murfreesboro and the kind of campaign then made. The only engagements with the enemy of any importance were those of Hoover's and Liberty Gaps.

Rousseau said July 6th, near Dechard :

"In Hoover's Gap, the enemy had two brigades and a detached regiment or so. . . . Colonel Hambright" (that was the commander of the brigade to which the Twenty-first Wisconsin was attached) "being ordered to move forward and attack the enemy in his front on the main road, which he did with alacrity driving the enemy before him."

Farther on, General Rousseau says, "Seeing the left turned, the enemy fled with precipitation, taking advantage of the high ground in his retreat to fire a few shots of artillery as he left. . . .

"The loss in my division was, first brigade, one killed, ten wounded ; second brigade, twelve wounded ; third brigade, three killed, twenty wounded. . . .

"Altogether this was the most remarkable march I have ever known. It began to rain just as my division was being formed to march out of Murfreesboro on the 24th ultimo, and it has rained steadily every day since, but one. . . .

"It affords me great pleasure to say that my command

during all these trials discharged their duty, not only cheerfully and like soldiers, but with the greatest alacrity. Their behavior, in my judgment could not have been better."

In the engagement at Hoover's Gap at one time, the rebel artillery had a very good range of our staff. The shells burst so close that General Rousseau said, "Gentlemen, you must scatter." We rode off in different directions but none went to the rear. The right wing, being the twentieth corps, was successful at Liberty Gap, and broke through the enemy's lines.

On July 4th, we were encamped at a beautiful spot called Gum Springs. We had just heard of the success of the Union army at Gettysburg. In honor of that and the anniversary of American independence, General Rousseau obtained the consent of General Rosecrans to fire a salute. Colonel Loomis was our chief of artillery. He brought his own fine battery, the First Michigan in front of headquarters. The salute was not fired just as the general thought it should be, so he reprimanded poor Loomis before the whole staff in vigorous terms. Loomis simply said that he had misunderstood the general's orders.

Not every officer who had the power was considerate in its use. I remember a captain of a battery swearing at a negro teamster for driving his six mule team in between two pieces of the battery as it crossed a difficult ford. The wagon train as well as the battery was waiting at the ford to cross. One piece of artillery had crossed, but the next one was delayed. The negro seeing an opening drove the team in and crossed. The captain was sitting on his horse on

the opposite side of the stream and as the teamster drove out, he sailed into him with his tongue, but added, "I don't do this because you are black, but no one, white or black, can drive a team in the midst of my battery." I thought that apology was quite chivalrous. No worthy officer took advantage of his position merely to show his power.

"July 18th.

"I write this under the shadow of a great oak grove, near the Alabama line, just under the brow of the Cumberland Mountains. The army here is quiet now. I have a very pleasant tent companion. He is a native of Milwaukee. He was educated in Europe, went to school at Lake Geneva. He entertains me by relating his experiences in the 'old country.'" (That was Hon. John L. Mitchell, late United States senator from Wisconsin.) "Have just heard that poor Colonel Sweet has again gone home from Gallatin, sick. I would like to go to him if I could."

"July 24th, near Cowan, Tenn.

"I feel really fine to-day. The air, the sky, and the mountains are so solemn and still. I feel the correspondence between man and nature. We are only one of the phenomena around us. I forget war's alarms and feel how puny in the sight of nature, must be even such a war as this, which seems so mighty to us. Nature is always the same. She heeds none of the efforts of man. Even if mankind should be annihilated to-morrow, the sun would not be darkened nor the trees cease to grow. The grand phenomena of the universe would continue, though no human eye could look upon them. Knowing Nature makes no mistakes, that whatever happens in her realm is not only for the best generally, but also for mankind, I feel calm and happy, when forgetting all else, I become absorbed in contemplating her beauties."

"Camp Dawson, Alabama, August 24, 1863.

"Oh! how piping hot! We don't do much else than melt away each day, and congeal again in the evening by

jumping into Crow Creek. You should have seen what juicy specimens we were coming over the mountains, dropping in the road and by fence corners, completely overcome by the heat. Mountain scenery lost all its grandeur, seen through great drops of perspiration. Still we are across now on the banks of the Tennessee, in the face of the enemy, waiting for something to turn up. I think something is impending. Big preparations are constantly going on, and all the troops are concentrated at Bridgeport. Won't there be a hot time of it? I think Bragg has not much force at Chattanooga, but undoubtedly can receive reinforcements soon. When we cross the river, it is likely we may strike for a point south of Chattanooga and thus flank the position. I think there is no doubt about our having a big fight; for if they don't stand at Chattanooga, I don't know where they will go. . . . General Rousseau went to Washington some time ago. I presume he will return soon and the papers say that he has authority to mount this division. Then we will scour this whole country. We will go *a la* John Morgan."

When Rousseau went away, General Absalom Baird was assigned to the command of his division. The battle was fought while Rousseau was away.

"September 12, 1863.

"I don't know where to superscribe this, for we are among the mountains of Walker County, Georgia, south of Chattanooga." (It was at the foot of Steven's Gap of Look-out Mountain in McLemore's Cove.) "I write this during a temporary halt, occasioned by the presence of the enemy in some force." (The action at Dug Gap had occurred the day before.) "Did you ever march with a large army, with innumerable wagons over mountains, forty-five degrees more than perpendicular? Then you can form some small idea of the tedium, anxiety, dust, heat, and weariness that our division has just encountered. For two weeks we have been coming across the Tennessee River and over rocky mountains. But we are nearly over and I hope will soon be in the level country about Atlanta." (We did not get there until just a year later.) "The enemy are just in advance of

us, and may give fight about fifteen miles from here. We start on a forced march to-morrow morning." (The enemy then had turned back towards Chattanooga from Lafayette, and were trying to get between us and that city.) "An inspector of one of our brigades was killed day before yesterday in a skirmish. He was a brave, fine young lieutenant named Nichols. Rosecrans has his headquarters in Chattanooga. It was pure brain work that captured that place, without firing a gun, except a few shells sent in by a colonel to find out whether any force was there. Bragg was outwitted both here and at Tullahoma." (But Rosecrans carried his strategy too far. By scattering his corps, he came near losing the campaign. He should have concentrated at Chattanooga, and fortified.) "General Baird is in command of this division, Rousseau being still absent on some wild goose chase after mounted infantry, or something else, nobody knows what."

The affair at Dug Gap was no battle. Negley had advanced with his division to Dug Gap, close to Lafayette, and was in line when Baird's division joined him. The enemy being in force near by and threatening an attack, Negley and Baird drew back to the foot of Steven's Gap where 'Thomas' whole corps concentrated a little later; and where it halted until the 17th, waiting for McCook's corps to join it from a wild goose chase after the enemy below Lafayette. On the 17th, our division marched to Bird's Mill on the Chickamauga, and camped for the night between there and Gower's Ford.

CHAPTER XI

JUST BEFORE CHICKAMAUGA—A NIGHT MARCH

Great vigilance necessary from September 17th to morning of 19th—
Night march through the woods by obscure roads—General Thomas rode with General Baird—McCook's corps followed Thomas' corps closely—Some midnight reflections on the coming battle and the inhabitants of the field—The opening of the battle.

“BAIRD'S division with its right resting at Gower's Ford and extending along Chickamauga Creek to Bird's Mill.” This is the language of General George H. Thomas' report of the Chickamauga campaign in giving the positions of the different divisions of his corps (the fourteenth) on September 17, 1863. Before this date Rosecrans had discovered that Bragg, who some days before had evacuated Chattanooga was trying to get back into the city, and was then marching with his whole army to obtain possession of the Chattanooga and Lafayette road near Rossville, between us and Chattanooga. Could Bragg arrive at this point before Rosecrans, he would have the latter cut off from his objective. A calamity like that had to be prevented at any cost. Crittenden's corps was already in position at Crawfish Springs, on our left, having marched there after occupying Chattanooga, leaving Wagner's brigade to occupy the city, and McCook's corps was just closing upon our right at Pond Springs. Crittenden's corps, when placed in line, could not cover this Lafayette road, and at the same time

other crossings of the Chickamauga, and Bragg was rapidly marching north, parallel with our line of march, on that road. The problem was for General Thomas to march in rear of Crittenden's corps and gain this road ahead of Bragg, on Crittenden's left. The movement did not begin until 4 P. M., of September 18th, for the reason that McCook's corps could not connect with Thomas' right with all his divisions until that date, and in such close proximity to the enemy, the lines must be kept compact, or at least within supporting distance of each other. The first division commanded by General Absalom Baird took the lead, after Negley's division, which at first was leading, dropped into line on the right of Crittenden. As General Thomas and his staff rode with us, and it was one of the most important movements made by us during the war, the main facts are quite vividly impressed on my mind. It proved to be an all night march. But the men were veterans at that time. They had crossed the Tennessee River at Bridgeport on the 3d or 4th of September, marched over two mountain chains, and were thoroughly seasoned to such service.

The enemy was not far away, and the utmost secrecy had to be exercised. McCook's corps followed us closely, so as to leave no gap in case of attack. Had the enemy discovered that we were hurrying by our left flank to get between him and Chattanooga, he would have done one of two things—either attacked us in the midst of the movement, or increased his own speed to gain the coveted point before us. Therefore, to deceive him, when darkness came

on, the evening of the 18th, the troops left fires burning in their former camps, and along the line they had just occupied. In fact the night proved to be cold. Whenever a halt occurred, fires were built of fence rails, on the roadside, by the troops to keep themselves warm, and when we reached Crawfish Springs at midnight, there was a streak of fire on each side of the road as far back as the eye could reach. The weird forms of the blue coated soldiers, with arms at right-shoulder shift in the fitful light of the blazing fires at some points, and again at others, in the shadows only of the smoldering ashes, reminded the beholder as he glanced back over his shoulder at the long line, of the ghostly march of the killed in battle of "The Soldier's Dream."

How many of them took up that march of the dead the next day, and the next, the return of casualties of that awful battle alone discloses! These victims of the coming battle marched with as eager tread and as careless swing as those who survived. They were as merry, they made as light of the coming conflict as their more fortunate comrades who do not lie in the National Military Cemetery at Chattanooga. What a wonderful preventive of misery this is! This human inability to penetrate the future, even for the infinitesimal period of one day. Think of the despair, the dread that would have seized every soldier in that long line had it been apparent to him just who would be killed or wounded on the morrow, just who was then marching straight to death! Despair would have weakened those who were the doomed, and utter unhappiness through sympathy,

those who survived. Silence was the rule, although when the line would halt, there was a murmur of conversation. We halted two hours at midnight at Crawfish Springs. The men made coffee and ate something. Then they lay down and some fell asleep. I remember in the midst of the most profound stillness of that midnight hour, when every one supposed that silence was almost essential to the salvation of the army, that Colonel A. Von Schroeder, the assistant inspector general of the corps, came with an order from General Thomas. Instead of riding close to General Baird and delivering it in a low tone, he startled the echoes from the adjoining woods, but I think not the rebels who were farther away than the echoes, by hallooing in a high and excited voice from across the road. Poor Colonel Von Schroeder! he was near-sighted, and should not have been abroad in the night-time. Neither should he have been abroad in daylight, for the next day, he rode by mistake into the lines of the enemy and was captured.

Soon after leaving Crawfish Springs, we deflected to the right on a cross road which led into the Lafayette road which we were trying to reach. It was a simple unoffending cross country road, but along its obscure windings, some of the hardest fighting of the coming battle was done. Near Crawfish Springs on the right, we passed the field where Wilder's mounted brigade did some of the heaviest fighting of the war, in the coming two days. Farther on to the left, General William H. Lytle was killed on the second day of the battle. Still farther, we passed the place where the fatal blunder of the battle on the Union

side was made, where General T. J. Woods withdrew his division from the front line on the second day and let in the rebel forces of Longstreet. The peaceful woods lying in profound darkness said not a word to the passing regiments of these awful future events. As if in pity for those over whom the Angel of Death was then hovering, the spirit of the forest breathed the same monotonous murmur it always had. We marched along in blissful ignorance of what the next two days would bring forth.

“’Twas the witching hour of night, when graveyards yawn and hell itself, breathes out contagion to the world,” but there was not a hint of it on this road that night. The road, for the most part, ran through thick hard-timber woods, but about half-way between Crawfish Springs and Kelly’s Farm which was our objective point, there was a little clearing and a little dwelling known as “Widow Glenn’s,” where Rosecrans, the next day, lifted the name of the widow from the depths of utter obscurity to the dizzy heights of national fame, by making it his headquarters. In fact, this whole region which now has been made into a national park was densely wooded and the small farms scattered through it were marked only by log houses occupied by the obscurest of backwoods farmers, whose names would never have been remembered as far away from home as Chattanooga, only nine miles off, had it not been for the accident of the greatest battle in the west having been fought just there instead of at Chattanooga, where perhaps it should have been fought. But “man proposes, and God disposes,” and the Widow Glenn’s, Kelly’s Farm, Snodgrass Hill,

Crawfish Springs, McDonald's, Poe's, Vittetoe's, Brother-ton's, Dyer's, and Viniyard's in two days were lifted into national importance as points of a great battle-field. I visited the field twenty-eight years after the battle. The only change was a growth of trees on some of the plowed fields and a new, small frame house by the side of the old Kelly log house near which our division fought during the two days of the battle.

On this night ride through the woods, Generals Thomas and Baird rode side by side, and the two staffs mingled together behind, like the long tail of a kite. General Thomas was a very sedate man, who said but little. There was about him at all times, the very atmosphere of solid merit and reserve strength. There was nothing that suggested that he was conscious of his high position, or that he could anticipate any of the glory that afterwards came to him. So as we rode along in the gloom and foreboding stillness of that autumn night, no one in that cavalcade could have seen in the modest officer so quietly riding in our front, the true hero of the coming conflict, who should be known after that battle as the "Rock of Chickamauga." His command consisted of the four magnificent divisions of Baird, Negley, Brannan and Reynolds—more than twenty thousand men. Negley had been left in position during this march to the right of Crittenden, but the other three were on the road behind us, stretching away for miles—how many, I don't know. General Thomas saw Negley's division, as a whole no more until after the battle, but the other three were handled magnificently in the fight. Brannan lost more

in killed and wounded than any other division in that army, and Reynolds had the great honor of opening a gap through the rebel lines by a bayonet charge at the close of the battle through which Baird's division was the last to retire from the left line, on the retreat to Rossville.

I had always been curious to know how the route taken by our division from Murfreesboro to Chickamauga would look upon a map made expressly to show it.

The marches, sometimes by roads, often across country, over fields and through woods, winding over mountains by the crookedest paths, which ran quite often in the opposite direction from our destination, seemed at the time to me (for I had no occasion to keep posted by maps and guides) to be exceedingly haphazard. That we ever reached our destination by such marches, seemed at the time like a miracle. With what weary eyes the tired soldier gazed upon mountains that seemed always rising before him and never ending, in ridge after ridge parallel with each other, with scarcely enough valley between them in which to camp for the night.

Now, in looking at the map with our route marked out, one can see how remarkably straight to our objective, that winding and doubling march finally led us. This is so for another reason. Our objective, when the occupation of Chattanooga was abandoned, was the rebel army, and that finally marched to meet us.

At last at four o'clock, on the morning of the 19th, about daylight, the head of the column reached the Lafayette road at Kelly's Farm, while the head of the rebel column was

only three miles or less, away. There was an inferior looking log house on the opposite side of the road, and here General Thomas halted under a spreading tree. The troops were placed across the road facing the bridge over Chickamauga Creek which is about three miles southeast. General Thomas lay down on some blankets, saying to his aide not to let him sleep more than an hour. He had not been lying more than fifteen minutes when Colonel Daniel McCook commanding a brigade of Gordon Granger's corps, rode up and said he must speak to the general. He was immediately awakened and McCook reported that he had burnt a bridge after a brigade of rebels had crossed to this side of it. That this brigade could be captured if enough troops were immediately sent to that point. Just then Brannan's division was passing to our rear to take position on our left. He was ordered to hurry in the direction of this burnt bridge. It proved afterwards, however, that when this isolated brigade was attacked, it grew in numbers faster than Falstaff's men of buckram, and in point of fact, nearly the whole rebel army was on our side of the bridge.

After a time our division was sent in support of Brannan. I remember how the troops were deployed in line of battle, followed by General Baird and staff down through that dense forest. It was not long before the enemy was struck and as the first artillery shot awakened the dim light of those historic woods, Captain Williams, an aide, pulled out his watch and noted the time. Thus was our night march ended, and the great battle of Chickamauga was opened.



Monument of the Twenty-First Wisconsin Infantry
on Battlefield of Chickamauga.

CHAPTER XII

CHICKAMAUGA

Reference to the march of the two armies from Perryville to Chickamauga—Two problems before Rosecrans—First, to manœuvre Bragg out of Chattanooga; second, attack and if possible destroy his army—The first problem solved by September 7th when Bragg abandoned Chattanooga and moved south—He halted at Lafayette where he received considerable reinforcements—He then turned north again—Failure of his plans to take advantage of the divided Union army—The Union army concentrated near Lee and Gordon's Mill on West Chickamauga, directly across the pathway of Bragg's army back to Chattanooga—The battle fought on the 19th and 20th—A description of the battle—A night attack by Cleburne's division and part of Cheatham's—The formation of the two armies on the morning of the 20th—The left under Thomas held their position all day Sunday—A part of the right wing of the Union army gave way at 11 A. M.—General Granger came at half-past one o'clock with two large brigades from McAfee's Church and formed on the right—For hours, General Thomas cut off from the left—Palmer, Johnson and Reynolds proposed to Baird that they all march off the field—Baird refuses.

THE battle of Chickamauga was fought on the 19th and 20th days of September, 1863, on the wooded slope, lying between the West Chickamauga River and the western base of Missionary Ridge, nine miles south of Chattanooga. While Chattanooga is in Tennessee on the Tennessee River, the battle-field is in the state of Georgia. It is three hundred and fifty miles from Louisville, Kentucky, and one hundred and fifty miles southeast of Nashville.

The Union Army of the Cumberland was commanded by General Rosecrans and the rebel Army of the Tennessee had Braxton Bragg for its chief. These same armies had fought on October 8, 1862, the battle of Perryville, within seventy-five miles of Louisville, Kentucky, and on the 31st of December, 1862-January 2d, 1863, the battle of Stone's River, near Murfreesboro, thirty miles south of Nashville, Tennessee. Bragg's army had retreated from both of these historic fields, and the Union army had pushed after it from Perryville to Stone River and from that field to Tullahoma, Winchester, Decherd and McMinnville in Tennessee, at the northwestern base of the Cumberland plateau where in July, 1863, it lay in camp. The rebel army had then fallen back to Chattanooga.

The problem then before the Union army was twofold :

First, to manœuvre Bragg out of Chattanooga. Second, to attack and if possible, destroy his army.

The movement began on August 16, 1863, by the army crossing at different points over the Cumberland range of mountains. It then moved south down the eastern base until it came to the Tennessee River, twenty-five miles below, or west of Chattanooga.

In the last days of August and the first days of September, the Union army, except Crittenden's twenty-first corps, which marched towards Chattanooga on the north side of the Tennessee River, crossed the Tennessee River at three points near Bridgeport and Caperton's Ferry. It kept on over two high mountain ranges, always marching towards the southeast. This course would bring it eventually into

the valley south of Chattanooga. Bragg immediately discovered the danger to his line of communications. On the 7th of September, he evacuated Chattanooga, and moved his army twenty-six miles south to Lafayette. The next day one division of Crittenden's corps of the Union army occupied the city. Thus the first part of the Union problem was solved.

Rosecrans immediately resolved to follow the retreating foe, not knowing he had halted at Lafayette, and without concentrating his army at the city kept on with his original strategic movements over the mountains, ordering Crittenden to follow south from Chattanooga, leaving one brigade to hold the city.

Bragg began to receive reinforcements at Lafayette, from Mississippi and East Tennessee, and Longstreet's troops joined from Ringgold. He then turned again towards Chattanooga, but fortunately moved so cautiously and most of the time indecisively without knowledge of the position of the Union army, that the detached corps of the Union army were given time to concentrate. On the 11th of September as the Union fourteenth corps approached Dug Gap in the last mountain ridge (Pigeon Mountain) between it and Bragg's army, the latter was encountered in force and ready for attack. The fourteenth corps declined the proffered battle, and drew back to a more protected and more available position at the foot of Stevens' Gap in Lookout Mountain, to await the coming up of the twentieth corps under Major-General McCook, from near Summerville almost directly south of Lafayette. At this time the three Union corps were about twenty miles from each other and the rebel army was practically be-

tween the fourteenth and twentieth corps. It neglected its golden opportunity, however, to strike either corps in its detached location and by some hard marching and skilful strategy, the three corps of the Union army, on the 18th of September, were brought within supporting distance of each other on the west bank of the West Chickamauga River, facing the rebel army on the opposite side and in its direct pathway back to the city. This made a battle inevitable.

Two divisions of the twenty-first corps on that day lay at Lee and Gordon's Mill, where the state road from Lafayette to Chattanooga crosses from the east to the west side of Chickamauga River. Next up the stream, but several miles away stretched in line, the fourteenth corps, under General Thomas, waiting for the twentieth corps to close up on its right. Minty's brigade of cavalry had gone to Reed's Bridge, and Wilder's brigade of mounted infantry to Alexander's Bridge, down the stream from Lee and Gordon's Mill. General Leonidas Polk had marched his rebel corps from the vicinity of Lafayette to this mill some days before, and on this 18th of September, was confronting the Union twenty-first corps, but seemed afraid to attack, although he was several times ordered to do so by General Bragg. The delay enabled Rosecrans to bring the rest of the Union army to that position before the battle opened.

On the 18th day of September, the rebel army was in motion down the stream, which here runs north, on the east side of it, and was constantly reconnoitring the bridges and fords. It was repulsed from all of them, until it had passed below Lee and Gordon's Mill. General Hood, coming

from Ringgold, had crossed his corps at Reed's Bridge at 3 P. M., with a small force of Forrest's cavalry, and these were the first troops to cross. This was the advance of Longstreet's reinforcements coming from Lee's army in Virginia, to assist Bragg in the coming battle. In his official report, General Liddell, commanding a division in Walker's corps, says:

"About 2 P. M., on Friday, September 18th, I was ordered by Major-General Walker to take Alexander's Bridge across the Chickamauga. . . . In three-quarters of an hour we had it in possession. The force in our front consisted of Wilder's mounted infantry, from whom we captured a half dozen or more breech-loading rifles. Our loss was one hundred and five killed and wounded, and I only account for the disproportion from the efficiency of this new weapon."

But the floor of the bridge being gone, he crossed late in the afternoon at Byram's Ford. N. B. Forrest's main column of rebel cavalry on this same day crossed early at a ford near Alexander's Bridge and marched out to Jay's Mill to guard the right flank of the rebel movements of the infantry on Crittenden at Lee and Gordon's Mill. The West Chickamauga River, here, runs a little east of north and empties into the Tennessee, east of Chattanooga, about five miles. Hence, in marching back to Chattanooga, the rebel army necessarily had to cross to the west side of this stream. The natural crossing place was at Lee and Gordon's Mill on the Lafayette state road. This road, after leaving the mill, went straight north six miles through Rossville Gap, in Missionary Ridge, to Chattanooga, four

miles from the gap, leaving the river farther and farther to the right or east. This Rossville Gap was a very important point in the defense of Chattanooga. Hence, Rosecrans on the 13th of September, had sent General Gordon Granger with Steedman's division of three brigades from Bridgeport, on the Tennessee River, to this point. The distance was thirty-five miles and Granger moved with his usual energy, and arrived there the next day. He guarded the roads concentrating at this gap from all these bridges and fords. On the 18th, he sent Colonel Dan McCook's brigade to Reed's Bridge in support of Minty's cavalry. When Forrest attacked Minty in the afternoon of the 18th, Minty fell back across the bridge. Thus at the close of the 18th, the right of the rebel army was across the river; Polk's corps still on the east side was facing Crittenden's at Lee and Gordon's Mill, and farther up the stream lay Hill's rebel corps, facing the fourteenth Union corps.

When the day closed, Bragg called his generals to his headquarters, and issued his orders for the next day. He supposed the Union left lay at Lee and Gordon's Mill. He ordered that his remaining troops should cross at the bridges and fords below the mill, as rapidly as possible the next morning, and as each division crossed, it should turn sharply to the left, and assault the Union left in flank at the mill. But this plan was frustrated by the movements of the Union army during the night of September 18th, heretofore related. Kelly's Field, three and one-half miles north of Lee and Gordon's Mill, lay on the east side of the road,

perhaps three-fourths of a mile long, and one-fourth wide. Perhaps one-half a mile north of this field, the Reed's Bridge road came into the state road. In the triangle formed by this state road from Lee and Gordon's Mill to the Kelly Farm, north and south ; the Reed's Bridge road, east and west, and the river was fought the battle of the 19th. It was perhaps about three miles on each side and was densely wooded, with an occasional small opening.

General Brannan, in his official report says : " Shortly after 7 A. M. on the 19th inst., the second brigade, having advanced about three-quarters of a mile towards the Chickamauga, came upon a strong force of the enemy consisting of two divisions instead of the supposed brigade, who made a furious attack, repulsing Colonel Croxton's first advance."

This was the beginning of the two days' battle. These two divisions of Brannan and Baird, fought for perhaps five hours with varying success. The first (Baird's) division was attacked in the flank and rear, and lost many prisoners before Johnson's division of McCook's corps, about noon arrived on the right of Baird and in turn drove the rebels back.

General Crittenden, commanding the twenty-first corps at Lee and Gordon's Mill, hearing the firing, sent John M. Palmer's division to General Thomas. It arrived about one o'clock and attacked in flank a large force that had been fighting Johnson. Fighting had been going on all forenoon, from 7:30 by Brannan and 9 A. M. by Baird's division, and then by Johnson and Palmer, and a little later by Reynolds' division, which had come up from the direction of Crawfish

Springs. While all this was going on, what troops on the rebel side were making the attack? Let us take a glance at the movements of the rebel troops that then lay on the west side of the Chickamauga River, that were then unseen by the Union army.

It was N. B. Forrest's cavalry (he of Fort Pillow fame), 3,500 strong that had crossed early on the 18th. The advance troops of Brannan, as before mentioned, struck these at Jay's Mill driving them back. But they were soon reinforced by two infantry brigades of Walker's corps.

Forrest in his official report says: "They" (the infantry brigades) "broke the enemy's lines and could not be halted or withdrawn until nearly surrounded. We fell back fighting and contesting the ground to our original position near the mill on the Reed's Bridge road. General Cheatham's division coming up and engaging the enemy, drove them for some distance, but was in turn, compelled to fall back. Seeing General Maney's brigade hard pressed and retiring before the enemy, I hastened to his relief with Freeman's battery of six pieces, dismounting Colonel Dibrell's brigade to support it."

Bragg's division and brigade commanders, thus soon discovered that instead of turning to the left after crossing Chickamauga, which some of them had already done, they had to wheel to the right to meet a turning movement by Thomas' troops, and in the thick woods, at times so dense that a colonel could not see the length of his regiment, the varying fortunes of the day veered, first to the Union side and then to the other. Frequently the two sides came in contact at right angles, and at other times in the rear of

each other. They came together at all angles of the compass. The firing was deafening. Both sides were constantly bringing up reinforcements and sending them into the battle. When the day closed, Brannan had been withdrawn from the extreme Union left and placed near the right of General Thomas' line, not far from the point where it struck Kelly's Farm in the early morning. Baird was then on the left, and R. W. Johnson next on the right. These two divisions lay resting from the extreme fatigue of the day's fighting after sundown, unconscious that Cleburne's fresh rebel division had just arrived on their front from the extreme rebel left on the east side of Chickamauga River, and was then marching through the defeated and prostrate divisions of Walker and Cheatham to attack them. Cleburne was joined in this charge by two brigades of Cheatham's division, Jackson's and Preston Smith's. They covered Johnson's front and lapped over on a part of Baird's division.

Johnson says, "My entire line was attacked by an overwhelming force in front, flank, and rear. Here the assault was terrific, but darkness soon prevented us from recognizing friend from foe, and in a hand to hand contest, the enemy was repulsed."

General Baird says of this attack, "Just as the light of day began to disappear, I heard the sounds of a fierce battle in front. The enemy attacked with both artillery and infantry in apparently large force, and with greater determination than previously. . . . It was quite dark before it was repulsed, and we remained in possession of the ground."

The rebel general, D. H. Hill, who commanded both

Cleburne's and Breckinridge's divisions, speaking of this night fight in his official report said :

"I found that while our troops had been moving up the Chickamauga" (he means that they moved up after crossing to the west side), "the yankees had been hurrying down, and thus outflanked us, and had driven back our right wing."

General Cheatham says, "At 6 p. m., the division of General Cleburne arrived on the field, and with my command was ordered by Lieutenant-General Polk to attack the enemy at once. . . . In the night attack, Jackson's and Smith's brigades, only, of my command encountered the enemy. . . . It was then in this night attack that Brigadier-General Preston Smith received his mortal wound, from which he died in fifty minutes. . . . Two of his staff, both officers of excellent merit, were killed within a few minutes of General Smith."

I have been thus minute in describing this night attack, simply as a specimen of the kind of fighting along the whole line during the day, and because it fell under my close observation. Nearly every division had much the same experience during the 19th. Breckinridge and Hindman of the rebel side did not get in, but every division on the Union side was engaged.

The surgeon general of the Union army reported that about 4,500 wounded were treated on the 19th.

It was really a fight for position, in which neither gained any ground and no special advantage. Both sides knew it would be renewed on the morrow.

In the conference of general officers that night at Rosecrans' headquarters, it was decided that the corps commanders should place their troops in the best line of defense

possible, and that Johnson's division of McCook's corps and Palmer's division of Crittenden's corps should remain under the command of General George H. Thomas, as they had fought under him on the 19th.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 20th, General Thomas reformed his lines in a most admirable, compact shape around the edge of Kelly's Farm, the point where our division formed in line of battle on the morning of the 19th. It was placed one hundred and fifty yards inside the woods, which completely surrounded this farm, about one-half mile east of the state road, the troops facing east away from the road. Each division was formed in two lines, and both lines were protected by rude log works thrown up by the soldiers themselves. Thomas had command of five divisions, which were drawn up from left to right as follows: Baird's, Johnson's, Palmer's, Reynolds', who had only two brigades, and Brannan's. This last division which had been transferred from the extreme left on the afternoon before, was thrown back on the right of Reynolds', in what soldiers call "en echelon." Brannan's left was connected with Reynolds' right brigade (King's) which was en echelon with Turchin's brigade. These divisions, except Brannan's remained in these positions all day on the 20th. Baird's left brigade was also thrown back at nearly right angles with his main line, forming what the rebels afterwards called the "bloody angle." Baird's left did not reach the state road. To remedy this, Beatty's brigade of Negley's division was brought late in the morning, and formed in a thin line to protect this left flank. On the right from Brannan's line

west and facing south, came at first Negley's division of 'Thomas' corps afterwards relieved by Wood's division, then Davis' and Sheridan's of McCook's corps. Wood's and Van Cleve's divisions of Crittenden's corps were at first in reserve, but too far back for service.

This right wing from the right of Brannan's line was not well placed. It was not compact, nor did it properly protect itself with log or earth works. The line was not continuous. These omissions later on, proved fatal to it; and the disaster, in consequence of these omissions, that came to the right wing, finally compelled the left wing, notwithstanding its impregnable position, to fall back to a new position near Rossville.

This Union line thus formed in a crescent shape across the state road, facing east and south, was confronted on the morning of the 20th (Sunday) by the rebel army, drawn up in most admirable formation. Forrest's cavalry, dismounted as infantry formed their extreme right. Next was Breckinridge, then Cleburne, then Stewart. These were opposite General Thomas' protected line, but extended far beyond Thomas' left. Only Breckinridge's left brigade (Helm's) and part of Cleburne's division faced Baird's line of works. To the left of Stewart, came B. R. Johnson's and Hindman's divisions. In reserve, behind Breckinridge was Walker's corps of two small divisions. Behind Cleburne was Cheatham's large division of five brigades. Formed in compact column of brigades behind B. R. Johnson's division were Law's and Kershaw's divisions, and on the extreme left "en echelon" behind Hindman was Preston's

division. The strong feature of this formation was the large reserve behind every division. At the proper time, especially on the rebel left, and in front of the weak Union right, this reserve was most effectively used.

During the night before, General Longstreet had arrived from the army of Virginia preceded by large reinforcements. Bragg then placed him in command of his left wing, consisting of Stewart's, B. R. Johnson's, Law's, Hindman's and Preston's divisions. General Polk was placed in command of the right wing, consisting of Forrest's cavalry, Breckinridge's, Cleburne's and Cheatham's divisions, and Walker's corps.

Bragg ordered Polk to attack the extreme Union left at daylight, with General D. H. Hill's two divisions—Breckinridge and Cleburne. But for some reason, which Bragg, Polk and Hill all endeavored to explain in their official reports, it was not made until 9:30 A. M. At this time Breckinridge advanced with his three brigades in one line, but was surprised to encounter no enemy except in front of his left brigade, commanded by General Helm. This struck Baird's bloody angle, and was badly shattered, and General Helm mortally wounded. Breckinridge's other two brigades, Adams on the right and Stovall in the centre, together with the right regiment of Helm, wheeled to their left, and forming across the state road, facing south, with a battery between them, advanced against Beatty's brigade which alone could not hold the ground, but fell away to the left. But Van Derveer's reserve brigade of Brannan's division, and Stanley's brigade of Negley's division were brought. These, assisted by a few

troops from R. W. Johnson's second line, assaulted the rebels with great vigor, wounded and captured General Adams, and drove them in confusion to their rear. Breckinridge's whole division was thus repulsed and badly cut up.

Cleburne's attack came upon the right of Baird and the whole of Johnson, but he could make no impression. Wood's brigade of Cleburne's, in the dense underbrush manuevred out of line, and moved across Palmer's front. These were precisely the same troops on both sides, that had the night fight of the evening before. Then Stewart advanced on Palmer and Reynolds with the same result.

These several attacks lasted perhaps two hours and died away with a general repulse of the whole rebel line. Longstreet, on the rebel left, was ready to follow up the assaults. At about eleven o'clock, he ordered an advance of his whole wing.

Unfortunately, at this time, the right wing of the Union army was being readjusted. Wood, who had taken Negley's position in front when two of Negley's brigade were sent to Thomas' left, was in the act of withdrawing from his position to move behind Brannan, under a mistaken order of Rosecrans, telling him to close up and support Reynolds. To fill the space thus left vacant, Davis' division next on the right to Wood, was moving by the left flank, and Sheridan was on the double-quick to report to Thomas, to be placed on the left of Baird. Bushrod Johnson's division of Bragg's army, with Law's and Kershaw's divisions behind it in support, there being eight brigades in three lines was directly in front of Wood's position, and when that was vacated, he

happened, for it is not probable that he knew that Wood was moving out, to be executing Longstreet's order to advance, and charged through the opening, striking one of Wood's brigades and a part of Davis' division on the flank, while they were moving. At the same time, Hindman attacked the rest of Davis' troops, and the division of Sheridan, all being in motion. These Union troops were not in a position for defense, and necessarily fell back in confusion to the rear. Brannan soon found the rebel line on his right flank and rear. He fell back hurriedly to the rear and formed a new line with some deliberation, on Snodgrass Hill. Wood hurried his only organized brigade, Harker's, and one or two other detached regiments into the space between Brannan's left and Reynolds' right in time to repulse the assault there, after which he joined on the left of Brannan's new line on Snodgrass Hill. Negley had gathered some troops of his division and a large number of pieces of artillery on a hill to the right and rear of Brannan's new position. This was a mistaken execution of an order from General Thomas, who had directed him when Beatty and Stanley fell away to the west after the attack of Breckinridge's, to rally and post them with all the artillery he could gather, in a position to protect Baird's left, and facing the state road. But here he was in position instead to protect the right of the army, with his back to the state road, and Brannan says he promised to stay there and keep Longstreet from swinging into the rear. He did not stay, however. He marched away with the reserve artillery and the remnants of his division towards Rossville. Two Union

divisions and Wilder's mounted brigade cut off on the right were now out of the fight and did not return again. This left Thomas at half-past twelve o'clock with the divisions of Baird, Johnson, Palmer, and Reynolds' two brigades, behind log breastworks, Wood, with one brigade, only, and three regiments of Stanley's brigade of Negley's division and Brannan's three brigades. There were two or three regiments besides these that had not retreated with their divisions, notably the Twenty-first Ohio Infantry, which fell in with the line at Wood's and Brannan's front. These steadfast organizations had been greatly reduced in numbers by the great losses of the previous day and the forenoon of this day. The rebel line now outflanked the Union troops on both the right and left, and so greatly outnumbered them on the field that without unexpected aid, it looked as if the battle would end then and there in the defeat and capture of the staying Union troops with their leader, General Thomas. Fortunately the troops on the Union left did not know of this disaster to the right. They fought on and held their line, always repulsing the enemy.

Granger with his three brigades, three miles to the north at McAfee's Church, one and one-half miles east of Rossville Gap had heard the firing with much impatience, and having general orders to support and protect the main line, started without special orders but with the instinct of a true soldier, at noon, with two brigades towards the firing. When within two miles of Thomas' left, they met Forrest's skirmishers, and were shelled by his batteries during the rest of their march. This delayed them for a time, but at half-

past one o'clock, Granger rode up to General Thomas on Snodgrass Hill. Thomas immediately pointed to Brannan's right and the two brigades formed line at that place just in time to stop a turning column of Hindman's division of rebel troops. The firing here was deafening and the fighting of the most desperate character, but the rebels were forced back and the hill held.

Before going into this fight, Granger had sent back for his remaining brigade (Dan McCook's) to follow him. It did so, and was placed on a high point near the Cloud House, where a field hospital had been established in the left rear of Baird's position, but too far back and did no fighting. It should have been placed immediately on the prolongation of Baird's left, which would have prevented Gist's rebel brigade from marching later, boldly in rear of the Union army around the left. Now, at 2 P. M., the four divisions on the left held the same impregnable line of the morning, but how sadly changed was the line on the right and west of Reynolds' position! It had been shortened by the retreat of two divisions, and what was left of it, had swung back upon its left pivot at Reynolds' right, until the whole Union army was in the shape of a flattened crescent.

From Reynolds to the right, the brigades were in the following order: Willich and Hazen taken from Thomas' original front, Harker of Wood's division, most of Stanley's brigade, Brannan's two and one-half brigades, then the large brigades of Whittaker and Mitchell of Granger's corps. They fought thus through that long afternoon against the

five divisions of Longstreet, often without ammunition, but always holding the enemy at bay. For a long time the four divisions on the left were cut off, and received no order from General Thomas, nor could any communication be made to him. During the entire afternoon, there was more or less of a gap between Reynolds' right and Brannan or Hazen. The enemy failed to take advantage of this opening. Some time during the afternoon—perhaps about two o'clock—Johnson, Palmer and Reynolds came to Baird to discuss the situation. They did not know where General Thomas was and could get no word, either to or from him. Palmer was the ranking officer. It was proposed by these three generals to General Baird, that General Palmer be allowed to take command of the four divisions and march them from the field. Baird declined, saying that he had been repulsing the enemy all day, and that he could continue doing so until orders could come from General Thomas. So the four divisions remained in place. It was about this time that Granger was going into position with the two brigades he had brought from McAfee's Church without orders towards the sound of the battle, and General Thomas was personally superintending the placing of them on the right of Brannan and the other troops, nearly a mile away, and almost in our direct rear.

Had these four divisions been then marched away from the positions occupied by them, as proposed by these generals, the forces at Snodgrass Hill would have soon been attacked in the rear by the Confederate troops facing us. It is unnecessary to say that in such an event, the disaster to

the Union army would have been irretrievable ; it would not have stopped at Chattanooga. It is likely that the subsequent fighting would have been much nearer the Ohio River. The Atlanta campaign and the march to the sea might have thus been indefinitely postponed. General Absalom Baird is entitled to the credit of preventing that threatened disaster.

CHAPTER XIII

CHICKAMAUGA (*Continued*)

Rosecrans, McCook and Crittenden went to Chattanooga—Garfield made his way from Rossville to General Thomas—The Union army retreats by order of Rosecrans, to Rossville—Its manner of falling back—Extracts from reports of rebel generals and colonels who made attacks on Thomas' line—Granger wanted Thomas to disobey Rosecrans' order and remain on the field—Reason why it could not be done—The losses given and the probable number of troops on each side—The loss on the rebel side the largest of the war—Curiosities of names and the prominence of officers in this battle—General Bates' rhetorical report—Dana's characteristic dispatches to the War Department—Reference to the National Military Park afterwards established on the battle-field.

ROSECRANS, in his official report says, in volume 30, part 1, "Rebellion Records," page 60 :

"The fight on the left" (meaning that part of the army left on the field) "after 2 P. M., was that of the army. Never in the history of this war, at least, have troops fought with greater energy and determination. Bayonet charges, often heard of, but seldom seen, were repeatedly made by brigades and regiments in several of our divisions."

Until four o'clock, Thomas did not know certainly that the right had been defeated and that in the tide of retreat, Rosecrans, Major-General McCook, Crittenden, Sheridan, Davis and Negley had been carried away from the battle. They did not again come upon the field. General James A. Garfield, who was Rosecrans' chief of staff, after accompanying the latter as far as Rossville, came back with the

knowledge and consent of Rosecrans, with some other staff officers, and made his way through Rossville Gap to Thomas. Rosecrans, McCook and Crittenden had kept on to Chattanooga. General Thomas in his official report says :

“General Garfield, chief of staff to General Rosecrans, reached this position about 4 P. M. . . . He gave me the first reliable information that the right and centre of our army had been driven, and of its condition at that time. I soon after received a dispatch from General Rosecrans, directing me to assume command of all the forces. . . . Take a strong position, and assume a threatening attitude at Rossville. . . . I determined to hold the position until nightfall if possible. . . . At 5:30 P. M., Captain Barker of my staff was sent to notify General Reynolds to commence the movement, and I left the position behind General Wood’s command to meet Reynolds and point out to him the position where I wished him to form line, to cover the retirement of the other troops on the left.”

He then tells how a rebel line had formed along the state road behind the Union left, and that Reynolds’ leading brigade (Turchin’s) in moving back, made a charge on it and drove it far beyond Baird’s left. This was Gist’s troops of Walker’s corps, which corps had advanced some time after the repulse of Breckinridge.

Reynolds then formed his two brigades and Willich’s of Johnson’s division in line in a favorable position and behind these, the divisions of Palmer, Johnson and Baird successively fell back. Baird’s division was the last to leave the original front line. After dark all were on the road, and at midnight the whole Union army was concentrated at Rossville, about four miles from the battle-field.

Now, in order to determine how valuable and effective these works on the left were, in enabling the left four divisions of General Thomas to disable the enemy, let us see how badly the troops opposed to them were used up. Helm's brigade of Breckinridge's division and Cleburne's division, especially Polk's brigade, assaulted the line held by Baird. Adams and Stovall also came in on the rear of Baird.

General P. R. Cleburne in his official report of the battle of Chickamauga, says, "About ten o'clock next morning, September 20th, I received orders . . . to advance. . . . Polk's brigade and the right of Wood's encountered the heaviest artillery fire I have ever experienced. I was now within short canister range of a line of log breastworks, and a hurricane of shot and shell swept the woods from the unseen enemy in my front."

The unseen enemy were Baird's and Johnson's divisions. Cleburne retired his line, and did not again attempt an attack until, he says, about 3:30 P. M. But it must have been later, say, 5:30 P. M., for he says he carried the works and followed to the Chattanooga and Lafayette road. But he did not carry any part of the works while we were in them. He occupied them because we were ordered by General Thomas to retreat, and it happened that at the time the order was being obeyed, Cleburne was making the assault. We could have held the works easily enough from any attack in front, but we were ordered to fall back as part of the movement for the withdrawal of the army. Cleburne and his brigade commanders all say they carried the works. This is not true. He occupied works that were abandoned. Wood reported a loss in his brigade of ninety-six killed and

six hundred and eighty wounded. The colonel of the consolidated Thirty-second and Forty-fifth Mississippi says of the first attack at 10 A. M. on the 20th, "In a very short time, I lost over one-fourth of my command killed and wounded."

General Polk, commanding a brigade that came directly against Starkweather and Scribner says, "My line from right to left soon became furiously engaged, the enemy pouring a most destructive fire of canister and musketry into my advancing line—so terrible, indeed, that my line could not advance in the face of it, but lying down, partially protected by the crest of a hill, we continued the fight an hour and a half."

Colonel Colquitt, who commanded the first Arkansas infantry in Polk's brigade says that the first charge in the forenoon lasted "somewhat more than two hours."

Helm's brigade of Breckinridge's division struck the regular brigade and went to pieces. Breckinridge says, "Twice they renewed the assault with the utmost resolution, but were too small to storm the position." Breckinridge's division was knocked out as badly as Cleburne's and did not renew the charge until the evening at the same time that we were ordered to retreat.

In the last charge, both Breckinridge and Cleburne report that several hundred of the regular brigade ran into their lines and were made prisoners. The assault by Helm's brigade was followed first by that of Gist's and then by Ector's. They were all repulsed and badly used up. Walker's division, followed by Cheatham's, assaulted in the afternoon.

General Walker, in his report says: "Breckinridge's division having fallen back, General Hill having reported Cleburne's division on Breckinridge's left routed, my reserve corps having fallen back in the detachments in which they were sent in and a column" (Gorden Granger's troops), "having been observed marching down the Chattanooga road on our right, I was compelled to insist on having something to do with my own command."

If Granger could have been sent in on the right flank of all these troops, what havoc would have occurred! There would have been a regular rout, and in a short time, a part or all of 'Thomas' corps could have been transferred to the right and a rout would have been probable there. This is only conjecture.

Gist says of his assault, "One-third of the gallant command was either killed or wounded. Reeling under the storm of bullets, having lost all but two of their field officers, the brigade fell back fighting to the position from which they advanced."

Wilson, for his brigade says of this charge at 10 A. M., "After a very unsatisfactory fight" (it was entirely satisfactory to the Union troops) "lasting probably forty-five minutes, and in which we lost some valuable officers and a few men, we were ordered to fall back and reform."

General Liddell says, "After a severe engagement, in which the enemy gave way opposite the right" (there were no breastworks there) "and pressed forward in large force on the left of the brigade, thus apparently designing to cut him off, Colonel Govan was forced to retire rapidly to avoid destruction."

Govan's advanced position was in rear of our division in the Kelly field, doubling back a part of the regular brigade. At this time my colored servant, Jasper, was making me

some coffee in that open field. Going back to see what this advance of Govan's was, I encountered Jasper with my reserve horses at this fire, and the coffee on the fire. I had to drive him off the field. He did not seem to realize his danger. Our rear regiments assisted by Willich of Johnson's drove Govan away. Govan also tells about going again to this position in the Kelly's field about five o'clock with Walthall on his right, and being again driven out—this time in confusion. This was the result of Reynolds' charge when he began the retreat of Thomas' line.

Walthall tells substantially the same tale of being driven back twice on Sunday by the heavy firing of our lines. So that Baird's position on the extreme left of the Union line was furiously assaulted by Breckinridge's, Cleburne's, Walker's and Cheatham's divisions in succession, but held its impregnable line against them all, until three times ordered by General Thomas to retire. There were twelve brigades in the charging lines. Other troops were brought up only on our left beyond our position, never to our line of breastworks. The twelve brigades charging these lines report a loss of 6,718 in killed and wounded. It is not possible to segregate the loss of these brigades on the 20th from the whole two days, but I think it would amount to 5,000.

Suppose the whole army had been as well placed and fortified as was the left on the night of the 19th, it is altogether probable that the rebel army would have retreated badly used up. Thus ended this great and remarkable battle.

General Granger wanted Thomas to disobey Rosecrans' order to fall back to Rossville, declaring the rebels defeated, and renew the battle on the morrow. But unfortunately, all the ammunition train had been sent to Chattanooga by some unauthorized person, and the rebel army still out-flanked us on both wings. Could the troops that had retreated, been returned to the field, and spent the night of the 20th in protecting themselves as well, and in as compact a line as the left had done during the night of the 19th, I believe the rebels would have retreated. I can testify that upon the left, we were still fresh and little hurt by the last day's fighting.

At the time of receiving the order to retreat, Baird sent back word to General Thomas that we were constantly repulsing the enemy and were then driving them back. We did not then know that the right had given way, and that our retreat was almost cut off.

In this, what may appear a rather tedious and uninteresting recital of the movements of a great battle, I have omitted the mention of numerous advances and repulses of the enemy upon the right of the Union line, where D. H. Hill said the rebel dead lay thicker than he had seen them in any other place. The charges there were very frequent, and the fighting perhaps never surpassed in fierceness. I am also aware that no description can bring to the minds of those who never saw a battle, any proper realization of the sacrifice of human life; the intense excitement and strain upon the physical and mental powers, of the combatants; the hurried movements of the troops; the constant dread

of disaster ; the destruction of property ; and the suffering of the wounded.

During the battle, prisoners were being captured by both sides at all hours. The Union army lost in prisoners in the two days about 4,770, a majority of whom were wounded and left on the field, and many others failed to leave the field at the close of the battle through a misunderstanding of orders. Some were unwilling to take the chances of leaving the protection of the log works until it was too late. The Union army captured a little more than 2,000 prisoners. But what of the killed and wounded ! These furnish the evidence of the great fighting and persistent bravery, the grit and perseverance of the common soldiery on each side. The Union loss was 11,338 of all arms, killed and wounded. This is large ; but Longstreet says in his book, "From Manassas to Appomattox," that the Confederate killed and wounded at Chickamauga were 16,986. He claims they had a few under 60,000 present in the battle, so that more than one-fourth, over twenty-eight per cent. were hit. The Union army had about 55,000, but had only 11,338 hit, or a little more than one-fifth or less than twenty-two per cent. This rebel loss here is greater than the loss in killed and wounded in the rebel army at Gettysburg, and the largest rebel loss during the Civil War in a single battle. Here was an aggregate of 28,324 men on both sides struck by shot and shell, a number equal to the population of a small city. No wonder the rebel army failed to advance to the new position at Rossville the next day, and there is justification for its slow movement into position around

Chattanooga during the last days of September. It never won another battle.

The rebel general, D. H. Hill, who as I said before, commanded a corps of two divisions in this battle, in an article he wrote upon Chickamauga for the *Century Magazine*, long after the war, said :

“But the commander-in-chief (Bragg) did not know of the victory until the morning of the 21st, and then did not order a pursuit. . . . There was no more splendid fighting in '61, when the flower of the southern youth was in the field, than was displayed in the bloody days of September, '63. But it seemed to me that the élan of the southern soldier was never seen after Chickamauga; that brilliant dash that distinguished him was gone forever. He was too intelligent not to know that the cutting in two of Georgia meant death to all his hopes. . . . He fought stoutly to the last, but after Chickamauga, with the sullenness of despair and without the enthusiasm of hope. That ‘barren victory’ sealed the fate of the Southern Confederacy.”

That is the testimony of a rebel general who had personally served in Lee's army of Virginia. It will thus be seen that the second part of the problem which the Union army started out to solve in this campaign, viz.: the destruction of the rebel army was practically accomplished by this battle; its power to win future victories was destroyed, yet it was technically a Union defeat, because the field was left in possession of the rebel army. The immediate result of this battle might have been different, had the right wing on Sunday morning been placed in the same compact formation in which the left was; or if after the

right was broken, the divisions cut off, had reformed under a competent commander, been joined by Wilder's mounted brigade, which was also cut off in the same neighborhood, and R. B. Mitchell's cavalry corps which was guarding the right flank of the Union army beyond Crawfish Springs, and this combined force had been led in attack against the rear of Longstreet's wing while it was fighting the Union right, at or after the time of Granger's arrival on the field. The reports of the rebel generals say that an attack from that direction was what they feared. But there was no general officer within ten miles of the battle-field to organize and lead such a force at such a time.

Rosecrans, McCook or Crittenden was the only one who could have done it, but all three were at Chattanooga. Had one division, Sheridan's for instance, attacked on that flank with the vigor that Granger did when he arrived from McAfee's Church, there is little doubt that the rebel army would have retreated at about the time the Union army did. But while Granger was marching towards the battle-field on one side of Missionary Ridge, Sheridan was marching away from it on the other side. Suppose, however, that the rebel army had retreated from the field and left the Union army in temporary possession. The final result would have been the same that it was. The Union army would have fallen back to Chattanooga, just as it did, to recuperate and form a new base for a new campaign in two months or more, or in the spring of 1864. This is what actually occurred.

But we must not think too harshly of those troops that were cut off. Sheridan's division had fought well, up to the time

of its retreat, and its reported loss in killed and wounded almost equalled any other Union division except Brannan's, which lost the most in killed and wounded. Negley's division lost the least. Baird's division lost the largest aggregate of killed, wounded and prisoners. As we all know, Sheridan was a genuine soldier, who afterwards did great service for the Union. Davis afterwards commanded the Fourteenth Corps and was known as a fighter. Rosecrans, A. McD. McCook, Crittenden, Negley and Van Cleve were afterwards relieved from command, and this battle practically ended their war service.

The general officers, on the Union side, who came out of this battle with the greatest credit were Thomas, Brannan, Baird, Granger, Steedman, Palmer, Reynolds; and as brigade commanders, Hazen, Harker, Van Derveer, Croxton, Whittaker, and John G. Mitchell. The reports of the Union side are very full and the statistics, as published in the record are copious and accurate. But the rebel reports are many of them lacking in statistics, and it is very difficult to estimate their aggregate numbers. The losses are pretty generally given, but the numbers engaged are frequently omitted entirely, or only estimated. After a study of the whole matter, I have concluded that Rosecrans had 56,000 and Bragg 65,000 engaged, or in that proportion.

In volume 29, part 2, page 721 of the "Rebellion Record," as published by the War Department, General Lee writes Jefferson Davis stating the forces available to Bragg on August 20th, a month before the battle, and he made it over 76,000, outside of those Longstreet took him.

Bragg's own report at that time (August 20th), added to the known number of the different reinforcements at the time of battle would make a force present of about 83,000, but these were not all fighting men. The figures I give above are not far from correct. The troops on the rebel side were from every Confederate state, and Kentucky. Those of the Union side were mostly from Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana; a few regiments of Kentucky, Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, two from Minnesota, one from Kansas, and one or two from Missouri. It is singular that there was not an Iowa regiment in the battle.

The rebels had forty-eight batteries, the Union army, thirty-six; the rebels thirty-four regiments of cavalry, the Union army, eighteen. In a battle like this the infantry do the real fighting—but Forrest dismounted his cavalry, and fought as infantry. I do not know of any Union cavalry doing this in this battle except Wilder's mounted infantry—and of this arm, the rebels had one hundred and seventy-seven regiments, the Union army, one hundred and thirty. The Union army lost one hundred and forty officers killed, and six hundred and nine wounded; the rebel army lost a much greater number, but no tables are given. The Union artillery had five hundred and fifty horses killed. Battery H, fifth United States Artillery, of Baird's division, lost more men killed and wounded than any other battery in the Union army. Of the prisoners captured by the Union army, the Fourteenth Corps captured more than half.

General H. V. Boynton, who commanded the Thirty-fifth Ohio Infantry in Brannan's division, and wrote most

intelligently about this and other battles, after critical study of them said :

“In percentage of loss and for the time of fighting, there are no battle records which equal it from, and including the days of the first Napoleon. It was for both sides, as the figures of strength and losses show, the best illustration of the pluck, the endurance, and the stubborn, dogged courage of American soldiers, which the war produced.”

As to the personnel of the general officers on both sides, it is interesting to study them as they were known, not only before and at the time of the battle, but as some of them are known since.

On the rebel side, General J. C. Breckinridge had been Vice-President of the United States before the war, at the time Buchanan was president. I think it was fortunate for us that Breckinridge happened to be the division commander who outflanked our left ; also that General Leonidas Polk commanded that wing, and not Longstreet. Had our unprotected left flank been attacked with the vigor that our right was, it might have been disastrous. Cleburne happened to strike our breastworks fairly with his whole division, but had he been placed where Breckinridge was, and found that more than two brigades could swing around on unprotected ground into our rear, he would certainly, judging from his reputation as a soldier, have given us more trouble than Breckinridge did. This would have been especially so, had Longstreet been on that wing. With Walker's corps and Cheatham's division in reserve to follow up the movement, a real soldier like Longstreet, would not have made such feeble efforts, or rather so infrequent effort, as

Polk did. None of them could have taken the works by direct assault, as Cleburne clearly proved, but when wing commander Polk, Breckinridge, Walker and Cheatham, with Forrest's two brigades of dismounted cavalry on the right as a protection, found that they so far outflanked us, it seems to me they should have made more out of the situation than they did. General Thomas showed his master hand in the way he defended this flank with the small force he had available for that purpose.

I am also surprised that D. H. Hill, who commanded the two divisions of Breckinridge and Cleburne was so little in evidence in the fight. But Polk is the one who is really responsible. He did not have proper control of his separate divisions and did not get them to effectively cooperate. It is a singular coincidence that the right wings of both the rebel and Union armies were feebly handled as a whole, while the left wings were so ably maneuvered.

Cleburne had in his division, a colonel from Texas, who upon the death of General Deshler, succeeded to the command of a brigade, who after the war became a very prominent democratic United States senator, Roger Q. Mills. An ex-United States senator from Mississippi, E. C. Walthall commanded a brigade, as also Senator Colquitt of Georgia. Helm, who was killed on the left early on Sunday, was a relative of Mrs. President Lincoln's.

Lord Wolsely says of General Forrest, that he proved to be the best cavalry commander on either side. A colonel, Randall L. Gibson from Louisiana, afterwards became a prominent United States senator. Singularly enough, all

these fought on the right under Bishop Leonidas Polk against the impregnable left of General Thomas. Hood, who lost a leg in front of the Union right, afterwards succeeded to the command of this rebel army and was badly defeated at Nashville in December, 1864, by General Thomas. Longstreet came fresh from the army of Virginia. He was a fine officer of high standing. His report of the battle is a model for fulness and lucidity. He gives his strength and losses in detail. On the other hand, Polk's report contains no statistics and gives no information worth knowing.

The commander of a rebel division was States Rights Gist. A man with that name was almost compelled by reason of it to fight against the Union or his given name would be destroyed. B. R. Johnson commanded a division on the rebel side, and R. W. Johnson on the Union side. S. A. M. Wood commanded a brigade on the rebel side, and T. J. Wood a division on the Union side.

As a specimen of flowery rhetoric, I give an extract from a rebel report. He closes as follows :

“ While I recount the services of the living, I cannot pass unremembered the heroic dead ; the cypress must be interwoven with the laurel. The bloody field attested the sacrifice of many a noble spirit in the fierce struggle, the private soldier vying with the officer in deeds of high daring and distinguished courage. While the ‘ River of Death ’ shall float its sluggish current to the beautiful Tennessee, and the night wind chant its solemn dirges over their soldier graves, their names enshrined in the hearts of their countrymen will be held in grateful remembrance as the champions and defenders of their country, who sealed their devotion with their blood in one of the most glorious battle-fields of our revolution.”

This officer after the war, was a United States senator from Tennessee, Wm. B. Bate.

A. P. Stewart, who commanded a fine division of three brigades (eighteen regiments and four batteries) and also fought opposite Reynolds' and Palmer's divisions on Sunday, lost 2,010 killed and wounded. He closes his report by saying :

"Greatly outnumbered, as we were by a skilled and determined foe, our own strong arms and stout hearts would never have secured us the victory without the Divine favor. Let all praise be ascribed to His holy name."

Rosecrans expressed his thanks to God for our preservation. Was the God of Battle protecting both sides ?

On the Union side, General James A. Garfield was chief of staff of the army. He went from this field to the halls of Congress, having been elected in Ohio at about this time, and afterwards became President of the United States. He is too well known to have any comment here.

General John M. Palmer, who commanded one of the staying divisions, became Governor and a senator from Illinois, and once was candidate for President, by a wing of the democratic party.

Brigadier-General William H. Lytle of Ohio, the only general officer killed on the Union side, was a poet as well as a fighter. He is the author of the celebrated poem, "Anthony and Cleopatra," commencing, "I am dying, Egypt, dying," but he did not write it on the night before the battle as many newspapers and lecturers have stated since the war,

General W. B. Hazen who commanded a Union brigade, in his book, entitled, "Narrative of Military Service," says, "In carefully studying the battle, one cannot fail to be impressed with the most worthy and heroic service of two division commanders, who stand out conspicuously from all the rest, Brannan and Baird."

The late editor of the *New York Sun*, Charles A. Dana, was then Assistant Secretary of War, and was present at Rosecrans' headquarters. He was caught in the break of the Union right at noon on Sunday, and driven back to Rossville and Chattanooga. Some specimens of his dispatches to the war department at Washington make racy reading. He thought the whole army was being driven and the first dispatch at 4 P. M. on the 20th was doleful in the extreme. He compared the rout to the first Bull Run. His next dispatch at 8 P. M., on the 20th, put a different phase on it. The next day he telegraphed the department a long dispatch, telling how Thomas held the enemy at bay all the afternoon of Sunday, with his decimated divisions. He says:

"Falling first on one and then on another point of our lines, for hours the rebels vainly sought to break them. Thomas seemed to have filled every soldier with his own unconquerable firmness, and Granger, his hat torn by bullets, raged like a lion wherever the combat was hottest, with the electrical courage of a Ney. . . . Army brigade commanders, Turchin, Hazen and Harker especially distinguished themselves."

It seems the Secretary of War could not distinguish certain words in this dispatch, dated September 21st, and

solemnly telegraphed back to Dana, to repeat them. Dana replied with great care, as if the fate of the army depended on it, as follows :

“ *Chattanooga, September 24th, 12 M.*

“ Words telegram 21st you desire repeated are : ‘ With the electrical courage of a Ney.’ My cipher clerk, myself, shall be more careful.

“ C. A. DANA.”

His dispatches both before and after the battle are marked by the same characteristics as his newspaper, the *New York Sun*, afterwards was. They are full of vituperation, praise when due, and racy observations. In a dispatch of the 23d of September, from Chattanooga, he gives the following cause of the disaster to the right wing on Sunday noon :

“ First, great numerical superiority of the enemy. Second, the too great extent and consequent thinness of our line. Before the battle Rosecrans evidently saw that his line was too long, and then attempted to shorten it. Third, and in its results the most fatal of all, the disobedience of orders of General McCook in placing his corps from one-third to one-half a mile farther to the right than he had been directed to do, thus elongating the line still farther. Fourth, the attempt of Rosecrans to reinforce the left wing when Thomas reported it had been forced back. In this attempt, he necessarily had to move troops from the right, the whole reserve being already engaged.”

He goes on in this dispatch to say that Davis and Sheridan were moving by the flank when attacked and could not rally their men on the field of action. That, “ it is plain that he (Rosecrans) having committed an error in too much

extending his line originally, he committed another and more pregnant error in the manner of contracting it which he adopted."

In one dispatch, in speaking of Rosecrans, he says: "The defects of his character complicate the difficulty. He abounds in friendship and approbateness, and is greatly lacking in firmness and steadiness of will. . . . Besides there is a more serious obstacle to his acting decisively, in the fact that if Crittenden and McCook fled to Chattanooga with the sound of artillery in their ears from that glorious field when Thomas and Granger were saving their army and their country's honor, he fled also; and although it may be said in his excuse, that under the circumstances, it was proper for the commanding general to go to his base of operations, while the corps commanders ought to remain with their troops, still he feels that that excuse cannot entirely clear him, either in his own eyes or in those of the army."

The study of this battle through the official reports and the most excellent maps that have been made since the war was most fascinating, much more so than a study of it on the field itself under the fire and repeated assaults of Breckinridge's, Cleburne's and other rebel divisions on the Union left.

This historic and greatest battle-field of the west has been made into a National Park under an act of Congress. The lines of the two opposing armies are designated by monuments to the regiments, erected by the several states whose troops fought on one or the other side. The field is almost in the natural condition in which it was at the time of the battle. The few farms then existing were generally small, and the farmhouses were inferior and built of logs. But one new

house has been built on the field and that is a small frame near where Kelly's log house had stood. It was a primitive region, and the park commissioners have so treated it as to preserve those natural features and leave it as nearly as possible as it was in 1863. The old roads have been made better and those that were closed, reopened. The new growth of timber has been cut down. Every spot occupied by troops during the two days' fighting is marked by a tablet or by an elaborate monument. Actual pieces of artillery have been placed where batteries stood in the battle. The southern states have entered heartily into the matter, and General Stewart, who commanded a rebel division in the battle, has been a member of the commission from the first. An object lesson on a grand scale is thus given to this and coming generations.

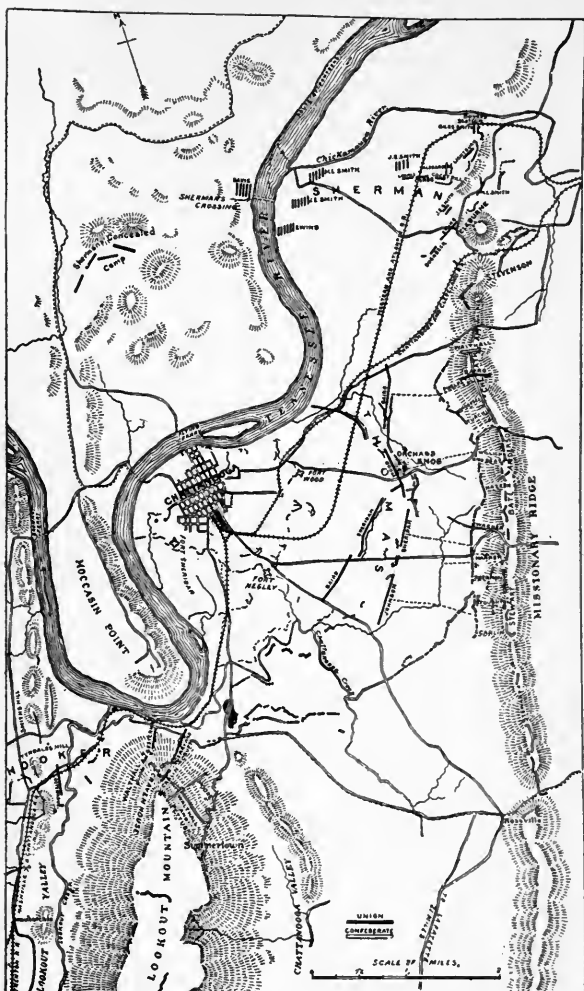
It has been considered that the highest form of patriotism is the defense of one's country on the field of battle against a foreign foe. But he who would learn a new lesson in high patriotism in the future will visit this illustrious National Park and ponder amidst its monuments and silent woods, the immortal fame of those who were brave enough and loved their country enough to fight and conquer their own kindred, whose swords were drawn against the flag of our common country.

CHAPTER XIV

AT CHATTANOOGA

Forming the lines at Rossville on September 21st—Next day the division following the army fell back to Chattanooga—The rebel army slowly followed and formed lines on Lookout, in the valley and along the crest of Missionary Ridge—Some reflections on the year following the battle of Perryville—General Rousseau assigned to the post at Nashville and General R. W. Johnson to the command of our division—The battles of Lookout Mountain, Orchard Knob and Missionary Ridge, fought—The rebels routed and followed to Taylor's Ridge—Before the battles, Hooker with two corps, the eleventh and twelfth, from the Army of the Potomac, and Sherman with the Army of the Tennessee joined us—Grant had command of all the forces—Grant, Thomas, Sherman, Sheridan, Hooker and Howard, all present—The author relieved of staff duty at his own request—Returned to the command of his regiment then stationed on Lookout Mountain—The geniality of General R. W. Johnson—A visit to the battle-field of Chickamauga—Some descriptions of Lookout Mountain—The recruits of the Twenty-First.

THAT part of the army that remained on the field of Chickamauga with General Thomas until the evening of September 20, 1863, fell back to Rossville that night. The next morning a new line was formed across the hills covering the gap. General Baird asked me to form the division. I do not remember the hour I commenced to execute the order, but it was in the morning. I did not know then how badly the rebel army was used up and as our division was to occupy a line that appeared to be the key to the position straddling the road running through the gap, I was intensely



CHATTANOOGA—LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN—MISSIONARY RIDGE.

By Courtesy of General H. V. Boynton.

anxious to get the division into position as soon as possible. My mind was completely absorbed in the work. A great deal of riding had to be done. The division had not camped together the night before, and was very much scattered. When the line was finally formed, I said to myself, "It must now be about ten o'clock A. M." I looked at my watch. It was 3 P. M. When the thoughts are so completely concentrated on a single object, one takes no account of time. What is called time, is merely a subjective condition. Objectively, there is no time. In the workings of the forces of nature, time, as man has it artificially arranged, is not an element.

We remained in line at Rossville until the morning of the 22d. At the time I was placing the first division in battle line, on the morning of the 21st, I was unaware that other troops were in line in front of us. I think they were some of the twentieth corps, and perhaps some of Negley's who had retreated from the field about eleven o'clock A. M. on the 20th. But we were the last troops to leave the line at Rossville before daylight on the 22d. We arrived at Chattanooga during that day. We had not been attacked since leaving Chickamauga on the evening of the 20th. The rebel army was very slow in following us to Chattanooga. They occupied the line of Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain when they did come up, but did not attack us at all. They threw up lines of earthworks and awaited an attack from us. This was not made until November 25th, after Grant had been sent to us. It was perhaps a mistake that Rosecrans did not undertake to hold Lookout Mountain. It is possible

that he could not with the forces at his command. The rebel occupation of Lookout gave them the control of the river and the river road to our base of supplies at Stevenson and Bridgeport. This came very nearly forcing us to fall back from Chattanooga.

"Chattanooga, September 24, 1863.

"Artillery firing at long range is kept up during the day, but no particular damage done."

"September 27th.

"We are almost impregnable here but the lines of communication to the rear may be cut. Have no fears for the future; we have but to mourn the past." (How true this was. The western rebel army never forced the Army of the Cumberland to retreat again.) "We are going to hold Chattanooga at all hazards. So all the reports that our army is destroyed or will have to retreat farther than this place are unfounded. We injured the enemy more than he did us. . . . Evidently they are in no condition to attack us, for they lie within three miles, and their pickets are within three hundred yards of ours. My horse received a little scratch on the foot. The little chestnut horse was lost by my servant when I drove him off the field." (I afterwards recovered this horse at Chattanooga.) "The want of sleep and sustenance and the excessive dust put me into a half comatose state. But I am now 'caught up' and feel remarkably well. I go out to the picket line occasionally and get shot at merely to keep up a healthy state of the system and a proper realization of our situation. This is Sunday. A church bell rang this morning and everything looks pleasant and peaceful. Yet this is a miserable town. The inhabitants have nearly all gone."

"October 8, 1863.

"One year ago to-day, the battle of Perryville was fought. What a strange year has passed since then! Poor Colonel Sweet, who was wounded at that time, and was on duty so long at Gallatin, Tennessee, was transferred to the

invalid corps about a month ago. He is now on duty in Philadelphia, no longer colonel of the twenty-first. The major was killed on the field, and Surgeon Carolin died a month after. In the battle of Chickamauga, the lieutenant-colonel commanding and Adjutant-Lieutenant Jenkins were taken prisoners. The regiment is now commanded by a captain, who was the junior captain when we left the state, but is now the senior. I sometimes think of asking to go back and take command of the regiment, but they muster only about one hundred and twenty muskets—a captain's command. . . . We have a line of works about three miles long extending around the south side of the town, from the river bank on the west. In that line are two forts which the rebels had begun to build, but which we finished."

"October 22, 1863.

"It is very likely some fine morning, this army will wake up to find the commissary exhausted, and all the trains stuck in the mud between here and Stevenson, the nearest depot. But then we can live a long time on the horses and mules, together with white-oak bark. I sent one of my horses back to Stevenson to subsist him while the little chestnut is living here on dead grass and wagon wheels. I take him out on the picket line every day to let him have a whiff of the rebel army, merely to keep him well aware of the great cause which requires so great a sacrifice of corn and oats on his part. He seems perfectly satisfied and grabs at every shrub within reach. Noble old Thomas is in command of our army, and everything is just as quiet as if nothing had happened. Rosecrans, McCook, Crittenden and Negley have gone. I did not see any of them on the field of battle and don't know how they acted, but being in 'Thomas' corps, I had occasion to be several times with that cool old general. On Sunday evening during the retreat, I was the only staff officer with General Baird. We came upon General Thomas in a little ravine, but a very short distance to the rear. After talking awhile, he very coolly dismounted and told his escort to feed their horses in the corn-field. The rest of us were expecting the rebs on us every minute, and some one suggested to the general that they

might come over the hill. He merely shook his head saying, 'They can't.' We all felt perfectly safe at once and I took out some eatables my dorky had given me in the morning and divided with the general. He ate them, as unconcernedly as if they were not worth their weight in gold. But as a staff officer said to me afterwards in reference to the coolness of dismounting in that spot, 'I could have taken off my shirt and given it to the old general if it would have gratified him any. He seemed to perfectly understand everything; knew just what to do, and never became the least excited.' It thus happened that in the battle of Chickamauga, I not only rode on the field with General Thomas, but rode off the field with him."

"Chattanooga, November 22, '63.

"General R. W. Johnson is in command of this division and is trying to procure the service of his old staff. I don't think he can succeed, for reasons that only a military person would understand, but if he succeed, then I will very cheerfully go back to my little regiment and command it until the lieutenant-colonel is exchanged. I would very quickly have asked to be relieved some time ago, could I have the permanent command of my regiment, for that is nobler than any staff position in the world. Situated as I am, it is pleasanter on the staff.

"General Rousseau has assumed command at Nashville. I rode with him to Hooker's position on his way thither, and during the very social conversation we had on the way, he said that though he could not take me with him, not being allowed to take detached officers away from their divisions, he had spoken a kind word in my behalf at headquarters. I felt gratified for his remembrance but smiled (in my sleeve) at his idea that it would ever do me any good. He was not in favor at headquarters. I was sorry to see the brave and gallant general, the Murat of the army, go thus away from the old division, that fought under him so eagerly at Perryville, Stone River, and part of it at Shiloh. A junior major-general was placed over him in command of the corps. He felt it a reflection upon his ability as a military commander. He was therefore transferred.

"To-morrow's dawn will usher in (if rumor is to be be-

lieved) blood and carnage. The eleventh corps has been passing through town this evening, and taking up position on our left, and Sherman is passing on the other side to cross on the flank of the enemy, to strike him in the rear. So a battle is imminent."

Dana in his dispatches to the Secretary of War said that Rousseau aspired to the command of a corps and that everybody laughed. Sherman did not get in the rear of the enemy. He assaulted but made no impression. Thomas' army did the successful assaulting in the battle of Missionary Ridge. General A. Baird, who commanded us in the battle of Chickamauga, was assigned to Brannan's old division.

"November 29th,—Sunday.

"I have just returned from Ringold, eighteen miles southeast from here, to which point we pursued the fleeing columns of the enemy. Our division, General R. W. Johnson, commanding, struck the rear of their column, twice after leaving Missionary Ridge on the morning of the 26th. We made a charge by moonlight and took a South Carolina battery and several officers and men. Friday, we came up to them at Ringold, but Hooker had arrived before us and attacked a force of them posted on top of Taylor's Ridge. Hooker's men charged up a very steep place under a tremendous fire and carried the position, but lost about four hundred and fifty men killed and wounded. We have had from the beginning of the battle last Monday, November 25th, a series of the most brilliant successes. Missionary Ridge was carried by assault, though in places it was incredibly steep, and fortified by several lines of trenches. I never before saw our men do so well, nor the rebels so badly. Lookout Mountain seemed impregnable, but Hooker came over the lower slope under the crest with banners flying, while our division who had stood in line of battle, listening to the heavy musketry firing of Hooker's troops before they appeared in sight, saw the flying Rebel line first appear in retreat, then the boys of the Potomac rapidly following, all

above the heavy fog which had settled below the crest of the mountain as the day advanced. It was a great sight. But the taking of Missionary Ridge the next day was grander. At the foot of Lookout Mountain on the Chattanooga side is a stream that prevented our men from crossing while the enemy occupied the opposite bank. But when the rebel line appeared, at my suggestion, a battery was rapidly sent to a point close enough to enfilade them as they fell back. When they had passed beyond the mouth of the creek, one brigade, General Carlin's was taken over in a boat. They formed on the left of Hooker's line. The next morning Lookout was found completely abandoned by the rebels."

"December 14th.

"I was out on the Chickamauga battle-field a few days ago in the escort of Grant and Thomas. I saw six or seven skeletons of our brave boys unburied. They were in a very obscure place in the woods where the battle first opened on our front on the morning of the 19th. General Thomas cut a hickory cane close by them, and so did I. I was just wondering how much it would bring in the great Sanitary Fair, as a relic from the battle-field?"

"December 20th.

"It is clear and cold here. Wood and overcoats are in requisition. Christmas will soon be here. We know it only in name. I remember Christmas of last year. We were all packed for the march to the battle of Stone River. On New Year's we were in the battle. July 4th, we were near the enemy at Tullahoma. Thanksgiving we fought at Ringold. So it would seem in keeping if we fought on this Christmas. But I think we will not. I have been reading in the 'Atlantic' Longfellow's 'Birds of Killingworth.' How pleasant and beautiful it is! It is one of the 'Stories of a Wayside Inn' just published. I have sent for a copy. Colonel Sweet writes me some glorious letters from Chicago where he is now settled."

This spectacular battle of Chattanooga lasted three days and includes Orchard Knob, November 23d; Lookout Mountain,

November 24th; and Missionary Ridge, November 25th. There were two notable and distinctive features about this battle that are worth mentioning. First,—The presence of so many prominent generals as army, corps, and division commanders. Grant, Thomas, Sherman, Sheridan, Hooker, and Howard were there. I think all these were not present at the same time on any other battle-field. Second,—From the city of Chattanooga, which is the centre of a semicircle of which Lookout Mountain on the right and Missionary Ridge, three miles away, stretching from the front around to the extreme left, are the periphery, could be plainly seen with the naked eye, the battle above the clouds on Lookout on the 24th, and the next day the magnificent panorama of four divisions charging up the face of Missionary Ridge and carrying the rebel works at the top. These divisions were Johnson's on the right, Sheridan's, Wood's and Baird's in order to the left. General Baird had been assigned to the command of Brannan's old division. General Brannan was chief of artillery.

The colossal tactics of the whole three days were exceedingly brilliant. What is of more importance, every essential movement of the Army of the Cumberland was successful. A correspondent, writing from the field at the time said, "The story of the battle of Missionary Ridge is struck with immortality already! Did ever battle have so vast a crowd of witnesses! Fifty-eight guns a minute by the watch."

When the winter was drawing to a close, it was evident that another campaign was imminent. In February, 1864,

I asked General Johnson to relieve me so that I could take command of my regiment which had received some recruits and had also grown in numbers by the return of absentees. At first he did not grant my request, but after some urging, I received the following order :

*“ Headquarters, First Division,
“ 14th Army Corps, Tyner’s Station, Tenn.,
“ February 29, 1864.*

“ GENERAL ORDER,

“ NO. 35.

“ Major M. H. Fitch, 21st Regiment Wisconsin Vols., is at his own request relieved from duty as division inspector and will join his regiment without delay.

“ By Command of

“ BRIGADIER-GENERAL JOHNSON.

“ E. T. WELLS, Captain 89th Ill. Infantry, A. A. A. G.”

Captain E. T. Wells, who signed this order was wounded afterwards at Peach Tree Creek. He was a fine, gallant officer and one of the most intelligent and competent adjutants-general in the army. Since the war, he has been located in Denver, Colorado, has been on the district court bench, and is one of the leading lawyers.

The regiment was then encamped on top of Lookout Mountain. I immediately assumed command, relieving Captain R. J. Weisbrod. Captain Walker, the senior captain, was absent on recruiting service.

My staff service had lasted nine months and was pleasant in every way. In that time the division had three commanders, Rousseau, who commanded it at Hoover’s Gap and on the Tullahoma campaign ; General Absalom Baird at Dug Gap and in the great battle of Chickamauga ; and

General Johnson at Missionary Ridge. This staff service did not entirely separate me from the Twenty-first Wisconsin. It remained a part of the division for the whole time and I saw it frequently. When I first saw it after the battle of Chickamauga, it numbered only seventy, commanded by Captain Walker.

Starkweather's brigade at Chickamauga had lost more in killed and wounded than any other brigade of the division. In the advance on Missionary Ridge, November 25th, it was assigned to the reserve and remained in the works which had to be manned and held during the battle. So that by being on the staff at that time, I was enabled to take part in the assault. I rode up the ridge with the extreme right of Carlin's brigade urging the troops forward, when they were outflanked by the enemy and had received a temporary repulse. Our advance was greatly assisted by Osterhaus' division of the fifteenth corps, coming from Look-out Mountain and at the time was ascending the ridge from Rossville. The enemy fell an easy prey by means of this, to us and our division. We captured over a thousand prisoners. When we gained the top of the ridge, I witnessed the disorganized rout of rebels on the opposite slope. It was wonderful, considering the strength of the rebel position.

When the pursuit was abandoned at Taylor's Ridge, my duties until February 29, 1864, were of a much pleasanter character. I daily rode the picket line, inspected the different camps, made regular reports, and held the most delightful intercourse at our own headquarters and throughout the army, with the officers.

Headquarters were in a large brick house on a hill. Our mess, consisting of Captains Lew Morris, William R. Lowe and myself, occupied a large room on the second floor. Almost every evening, other officers, generally of the regular brigade, came in and had a social chat or a game of cards. General Richard W. Johnson was a frequent visitor and no one was more genial. He was a very early riser, while Morris and Lowe, and especially a Lieutenant Smith, an A. D. C., were usually late risers. He would frequently open our door early in the morning and chaff the boys about sleeping so late. One morning he found us all up much to his surprise, and turning his head backwards to an imaginary darky in the hall, he said loud enough for us all to hear, "Sam, take that club away—I won't have to use it this morning." One morning he found me up and dressed, while the others were yet snoring away. He said nothing and went down-stairs. Finding his breakfast ready, he sent a darky boy up who said, "Major, de general sent his compliments and invites you down to breakfast wid him." Thinking that he merely meant this in pity for my loneliness in having to wait for my own breakfast until my comrades should arise, I said to the boy, "Say to the general, I am much obliged, but we will have breakfast before long ourselves." Away went the darky, but in a moment he returned and opening the door with a grin on his face which showed all his white teeth, said, "De general say an invitation from a superior officer same's a command, sah." So I was very glad to breakfast with the general. Lieutenant Lowe, in speaking of the general's dis-

position to rise early, said he was too old to sleep much. He was only about thirty-five.

Grant, some time after the battle of Missionary Ridge, was anxious to ride over the battle-field of Chickamauga. So one morning General Johnson said to me, "I am going with Generals Grant and Thomas over the Chickamauga battle-field and would like to have you go along." I was very glad to accept. We rendezvoused at General Thomas' headquarters, and rode via Rossville and through the gap, then down the Lafayette road. This route brought us first to the left of our lines where our division lay on that memorable Sunday. As Grant gazed at the bullet riddled trees in front of that line, the only remark he made on the battle-field which I heard was, "These trees would make a good lead mine."

There were in the party, General Grant, General Thomas, General R. W. Johnson and General W. F. Smith, known as "Baldy Smith." There must have been many other general officers and numerous staff officers, but these are all I can remember. Grant rode his cream-colored horse and Smith kept close to his side. Neither had on any sword, but Smith carried a common stick about the size of a small cane. As we crossed a creek before arriving at the battle-field, the horses all stopped to drink. Grant pulled out his match-box and lighted a cigar. While he was doing this, his horse let fly with his hind foot at Smith's horse. Whereupon Smith hit Grant's horse across the rump with his stick and at the same time made some familiar remark to Grant about riding such a vicious horse. I was looking

intently at Grant at the time and was struck with his perfect stolid indifference. He never for an instant changed the position of his hand or head in lighting his cigar, nor said a word, nor did he seem conscious of the episode, though his horse moved up suddenly. I thought it very characteristic of his qualities as a soldier.

When Grant had first come to our army at Chattanooga, General Hunter had been sent on from the east by the War Department to inspect and report on the condition of the army. Grant ordered out the army for inspection, and rode the lines with Hunter. The latter was mounted on Grant's cream-colored horse, and was in full dress. Grant was on a less showy horse and was not in full dress, but looked rather inferior. I had never seen Grant before. When they came near our division, I heard Grant say to Hunter, "Let us ride across here," pointing towards us. So I inquired who that little brigade general was that seemed to be accompanying Hunter, and they told me it was Grant.

At Chattanooga, prior to the battle, the army was reorganized. The twentieth corps, which had been commanded by McCook, and the twenty-first corps were consolidated and called the fourth corps. Gordon Granger was assigned to command it. He had greatly distinguished himself at Chickamauga as a fighting general. Afterwards, the eleventh and twelfth corps, whom Hooker had brought from the Potomac, were consolidated into a new twentieth corps and General Oliver O. Howard was assigned to the fourth corps in place of Granger, who was relieved by Grant, for not moving to Knoxville with sufficient celerity

when ordered. Brigades especially, were consolidated. The regiments had become small and six or eight were put into one brigade.

While still on the staff, when all was quiet after the battle of Missionary Ridge, I applied for a leave of absence. The rebel army was then at Dalton and no movement of the army imminent. January 13, 1864, my first leave of absence was granted, for twenty-seven days. I spent most of the time in Ohio. After returning, I find the following letter, dated February 13, 1864:

“Once more I am at the post of duty, having arrived here on the 10th inst. At Nashville, I remained a day or two, the guest of General Rousseau’s staff. I had a magnificent time there, visited my old acquaintances amongst the officers and met many pleasant new ones. I rode round the fortifications and was at a very fine party at a house of one of rather secession proclivities, but was splendidly entertained by a little black-eyed rebel girl from Mississippi. . . . Our division is ordered to march day after tomorrow, but no one knows where.” (This was a reconnaissance to Buzzard Roost.) “The impression generally is that we will go towards Knoxville, so you see I have come just in time to enter upon active duty. All right—I think we shall have a rough, tedious, vigorous campaign, which if successful, will break the back of the rebellion. The rebs will strike hard, vigorous blows, and they have a large army and good generals. . . . After the march and the fight which is imminent therefrom, are over, or have ceased, I shall ask to be relieved from my staff appointment and take the command of my regiment. . . . The regiment remains at Lookout Mountain, while we go on this march, or I should ask to be relieved now.”

The next one was written from the regiment and is as follows:

“Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, March 4, 1864.

“I am writing this from my own headquarters in a large building, ‘above the clouds.’ The regiment is encamped in the garden in front of the house. Have been very busy since joining the regiment, and yesterday moved camp. The division is yet encamped ten miles from Chattanooga, and about fifteen miles from us. I wrote you that I should go out on the late expedition first, and then join the regiment, but the general, R. W. Johnson, issued an order that only four staff officers should accompany him, and my name was not among the number. The headquarters were to remain here, and the rest of the staff were to stay and conduct the business of their offices here. I immediately went to the general and urged him to let me join my regiment at once, as they very much needed my services. After applying to him two or three times, he relieved me, and here I am. He suggested to me that as Colonel Hobart would likely soon join, he would not let me go. But I replied that I had been on staff duty for a long time and the regiment thought I was neglecting it—besides I was tired of the staff anyway. Hobart will be here about April 1st. . . . But we have a rumor that we may be ordered to the front to-morrow. If so, all right; it may be better.”

“Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, April 29, 1864.

“All this week I have been at the front on picket duty with two hundred of the regiment. I am going out again in an hour or two, the men being still there. . . . This is most beautiful weather. The air on the mountain is fine and invigorating beyond all description. It is cooler than in the valleys and vegetation is more backward, but the temperature is bracing and everything is fresh. . . .

“My mantel over the fireplace is covered with laurel, pine and all kinds of moss and stones. I don’t remember that I have ever told you about Rock City and the lake and falls on the mountain. Rock City is about two miles from our camp, and is a village of immense rocks arranged in the manner of houses in a city, with regular streets. It is a very great curiosity, because the rocks rest upon the plain, and are entirely disconnected from any stratum. One of the rocks with a cave under it and an excavation in the side is

called the hotel; another resembles a camel; another an elephant. One is called Lot's Wife, and then two very high, slim rocks, standing near together are called the twins. The lake and falls are four miles farther out. A creek, called Rock Creek, flowing along the summit of the mountains, falls about twenty feet into the most beautiful little sheet of water I ever saw. It is about one hundred and fifty feet in diameter and is surrounded by a high precipice, except where Rock Creek issues from it, and murmurs and gurgles through a wild, deep gorge for two hundred yards farther where it again falls over a precipice, one hundred and thirty feet down into the most terrible of dark, deep gorges, and so goes on down the mountainside. The amount of grandeur there in a small space, is enough to occupy the lover of the romantic for days. The small falls and the lake are beautiful; the large falls below are grand. . . ."

I have a photograph of the lake and small falls, of large size, now hanging on the wall of my home. They were taken by the photographer of the point of Lookout, about the time this was written.

The letter goes on to say, "The half has never been told about this mountain and so far as the notoriety it should have, is concerned, it might as well have remained in the possession of the Cherokees, who evidently had poetry in their souls. Bulwer sings the beauties of Como, and Byron of Geneva—meaning the lake, Geneva—but those who have traveled in Italy and Switzerland, and have also looked upon the beauties and grandeur of this mountain, and the views from its crest of the surrounding valleys and far hills, say there is nothing in the former that equals the latter. These scenes seem yet undiscovered by the poet and the artist, but are destined to become the theme of inspiration to both."

Since then, Charles Egbert Craddock has written some most exquisite descriptions of these mountains in her novels,

while the "Battle Above the Clouds" has furnished themes for many a poem, and a few descriptive and misdescriptive lectures. Since the war I have become familiar with the mountain scenery of the Rockies and the Sierra Nevadas. Lookout Mountain is very tame beside these.

The letter proceeds, "We are now under marching orders, and a movement is anticipated next week. I do not know whether our regiment will move with the column, or remain at this point. I am ready for either event." (The order herein referred to was the opening of the Atlanta campaign.)

I had a great desire to command the regiment in a campaign; but knowing that Colonel Hobart would return about April 1st, I had no hopes of that. It will be seen further on in these pages, that early in July on the Atlanta campaign my ambition was gratified much sooner than I anticipated, yet it was not quite in the way I wanted it. Notwithstanding Hobart's transfer, he remained lieutenant-colonel of the twenty-first. The regiment was in his brigade, and he was much of the time with us. He could at all times veto legitimately whatever he chose, whether I liked it or not. He was too tender-hearted for a good disciplinarian, but took excellent care of his regiment.

Upon returning to the regiment on Lookout Mountain, March 1, 1864, I found that certain officers and enlisted men had been detailed on recruiting service during the past winter. They had brought to the regiment during January and February, 1864, one hundred and thirty-nine volunteer recruits. They were the first and only recruits so far as I

remember, the regiment received during its term of service. It will be observed hereafter that we received some transfers from other regiments but the above number of recruits were all we directly received. They were divided among the companies as follows :

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Company A | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 8 |
| " B | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 19 |
| " C | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 6 |
| " D | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 14 |
| " E | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 7 |
| " F | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 29 |
| " G | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 17 |
| " H | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 11 |
| " I | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 5 |
| " K | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 23 |
| | | | | | | | | | <hr/> |
| | | | | | | | | | 139 |

I do not know the reason for this unequal distribution. I presume they were allowed to choose their own companies, or it may be that the recruiting officers recruited them for certain companies. Major Walker was one of the officers that had gone on recruiting service that winter. He was captain of Company K. But why Company F should have received twenty-nine additions, I do not know, unless it had been very much more reduced than the other companies in the preceding campaigns.

When I returned to the regiment on February 29, 1864, these recruits had been uniformed and incorporated into the ranks. They quickly learned the duties of a soldier from older members. They did not appear to me different from the old soldiers, except they were younger and therefore my

knowledge of their individuality is very slight. I think they were mostly quite young and would have volunteered long before, if they could have been accepted by the recruiting officers. One, Alfred A. Nugent lost an arm at the battle of Bentonville N. C., when under seventeen years of age.

What a glorious resting and recruiting camp Lookout was ; how grand the air and scenery ! New life came to us as we gazed on the far off peaks of three states and the majestic Tennessee River that flowed so peacefully at the foot ; or as we cast our eyes back at the mud and starvation camps at Chattanooga that lay in plain view so far and yet so near below. Here the men gathered moss from the never ending rocks, and carved with deft hands the laurel root pipes to send to friends at home. Here we drilled and paraded, drew new clothes, renewed the acquaintance, long past, between our stomachs and mixed vegetable soup and dessicated potatoes. The native mountain girls were there. Their shy glances showed at once their willingness to forget for that winter, at least, the gray for the sake of the blue ; in fact, their eyes turned from gray to blue.

Our venerated chaplain turned one of the largest rooms of the headquarters house into a chapel, and charmed us with his best sermons. From here he went on leave of absence, and came near being court-martialed by Captain R. J. Weisbrod, who at that time commanded the regiment, for not returning in the time specified in his leave. The other officers laughed at this, for the captain never attended preaching. They sarcastically remarked that the captain missed the ministerial offices of the chaplain. But the threatened court-

martial was simply in keeping with Captain Weisbrod's strenuous discipline. He was a fine soldier. Grand old General Thomas visited us frequently, and was always received by the guard with all the honors of war. He was the George Washington of the army.

Every one had his photograph taken from the point of rock jutting from the north end to send back to his sweetheart, and he who appeared in the picture as most nearly falling over the precipice, which was a hundred feet high, and having the largest gauntlets, was the greatest hero. I have now a picture of a group of the officers of the twenty-first, fully uniformed and armed, standing as near that awful cliff as possible. I value it highly. During the entire war, danger was never much farther from these brave officers than this cliff then was. They were Captain James E. Stewart, one of the youngest and bravest of the regiment, Captain R. J. Weisbrod, Lieutenant J. H. Otto, Lieutenant A. A. Harding, Captain A. B. Bradish, and Quartermaster B. J. Van Valkenberg.

CHAPTER XV

THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

The Twenty-first left Lookout, May 4, 1864, on the Atlanta Campaign—The personnel of the officers—The army and its field of operations—Extracts from the rebel press—Buzzard Roost and Rocky Face Ridge—The battle of Resacca—Dalton and Pumpkin Vine Creek.

UNDER orders to join the division at Graysville, Georgia, the Twenty-first Wisconsin Volunteers broke camp on the 4th of May, 1864, and marched away from the top of Lookout. It had three hundred and fifty-two muskets in line. Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Hobart was in command. The other officers were, M. H. Fitch, Major ; Captains C. H. Walker, R. J. Weisbrod, James E. Stuart, Fred W. Borshardt, Henry Turner, H. K. Edwards, James M. Randall, and A. B. Bradish ; First Lieutenants, J. H. Otto, A. A. Harding, Joseph La Count, and W. H. Fargo ; Second Lieutenants, Hubbard and Dorien.

The twenty-first was a better regiment then than they had ever been before. The men wore bright new uniforms ; the glow of health was in their faces ; the sun glistened from their bright muskets, which they carried with the jaunty air of veterans. As they turned their faces on those mountain heights towards the south, they left disaster behind, and beheld success and victory beckoning them on. From that

moment to the close of their career, they pursued a defeated and retreating enemy. They once had to double on their tracks in pursuit of Hood. Could their prophetic eyes have beheld from the top of Lookout Mountain, their triumphant future battles and marches through Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and Maryland, ending with the brilliant, "tramp, tramp, tramp" down Pennsylvania Avenue, at Washington, D. C., they could scarcely have felt more elated and light-hearted than they did.

We descended the mountain road, crossed Chattanooga Creek, marched across the wide valley through Rossville Gap to Graysville, where the fourteenth corps was then concentrating. I remember well the first night's camp at Graysville. The white shelter tents of the army stretched away as far as the eye could reach. Some soldier desired to dispose of his candle, which still remained as one of the luxuries of the late winter camp and which he could not carry in his knapsack. He lighted it and stuck it on the top of the front pole of his tent. Another and another followed the example, until as far as the eye could reach, the camps were illuminated. It was a very striking scene and was a symbol of their unconscious faith in the future triumphs awaiting them in the pending campaign. In contrast, from that time until fair Atlanta opened to us her arms, darkness at night reigned supreme in all our tents except the little that penetrated the canvas from outside camp-fires.

It is pleasant to thus dwell on the quiet days and nights of our soldier life, when nothing more belligerent occurred than the "killing" stories told by our comrades, the

“piercing” laughter which followed “sallies” of wit, when good humor and fellowship ruled all the days.

Let us take a glance at the army and the field of operations then lying before it in what is called the Atlanta campaign then just beginning. Grant had gone to the Potomac as commander-in-chief. The department of the Mississippi had been created and Major-General W. T. Sherman placed in command, with headquarters at Chattanooga. General George H. Thomas was in command of the Army of the Cumberland, sixty thousand strong, and held the centre at Chattanooga. The Army of the Tennessee, under Major-General McPherson was somewhere west of Chattanooga, and formed the right of Sherman’s army, while the twenty-third corps under General J. M. Schofield formed the left, some distance to the east. The entire army thus organized, numbered over one hundred thousand, and were to act as a unit in the coming campaign. The rebel army, then lying at Dalton, Georgia, southeast of Chattanooga, was under command of Joseph E. Johnston and consisted of about fifty thousand troops.

Our base was Chattanooga, and the railway running thence to Atlanta was necessarily our line of operation. This line of railway had to be kept in repair and open. Hence a very large number of troops had constantly to be detailed as we advanced, for railway guards and repairers. A large force had to be left at Chattanooga. Also the railway from Chattanooga back to Louisville, Kentucky, had to be well guarded. A large army of reserve was thus employed through Kentucky, Tennessee, and as we advanced,

also through Georgia. It is well to note the distance from Chattanooga, of the places that became by reason of this Atlanta campaign, more or less historical :

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Ringold | 23 miles |
| Tunnel Hill | 31 " |
| Dalton | 38 " |
| Tilton | 47 " |
| Resacca | 56 " |
| Calhoun | 60 " |
| Adairsville | 69 " |
| Kingston | 79 " |
| Cassville | 86 " |
| Cartersville | 91 " |
| Alatoona | 98 " |
| Big Shanty | 103 " |
| Marietta | 119 " |
| Chattahoochee, or Vinnings, | 130 " |
| Atlanta | 138 " |

This was the situation in the field in May, 1864. At the same time Grant was beginning his campaign of the Wilderness, with about one hundred and twenty-five thousand troops. What of the situation on the rebel side at this time? Here is what the rebel press was saying :

The *Richmond Sentinel* of the 12th of January, 1864, foreshadowed the campaign of 1864 in these words :

"To the timid, the new born year lowers gloomily ; to the prudent, there appears cause for anxious solicitude, while even heroism, itself, sees that the tug of war, the crisis of the struggle, is upon us, and that we must prepare ourselves for the tremendous shock. We cannot contemplate the coming next, and the fourth campaign of the pending war, without solicitude. We shall be strongly pressed by the enemy. They are making busy preparations. They are buying mer-

cenaries for the fight as men buy sheep for the shambles. They are paying bounties, the half of which the world never heard of before. They are spending money with a reckless profusion that contrasts strongly with their native parsimony. Our enemies, too, will commence the next campaign with some advantages of position, which they did not have at the beginning of 1863. They will begin at Chattanooga instead of at Nashville; at Vicksburg instead of at Memphis. They come flushed, also, with wild hopes, and they are filled with increased arrogance. It will be incumbent on us, during the current year, to call out all our resources and put forth all our strength. We must make the most vigorous battle of which we are capable. Everything is at stake—property, honor, liberty, life itself, and a great danger presses.

“There are some in this supreme hour of life and death, when we are fighting a foe that comes upon us like a flood, when our country, itself, is at stake and threatened with destruction, who make it their part to be extremely noisy about State Rights and habeas corpus and the largest liberty to every person, who is disposed to abuse it. They are as wise as those who cried ‘fire’ in the midst of the universal deluge.

“Others there are who dog the steps of the president, assail his acts, assail his motives, attack his usefulness, and do all they can to make his efforts unsuccessful. From all these men, the people must turn away. Whether in congress or out of it, they are doing the enemy’s work. They are distracting us when distraction is destruction. They are dividing us when division is death.”

The *Richmond Examiner* of about the 1st of February said :

“The time has passed for offensive military operations on the part of the Southern armies. Beyond recovering the lost portions of territory, the true policy now is to risk nothing. Our means of subsistence have been too far exhausted to admit of any other than defensive tactics. It has become with us now a simple question of endurance. With the south, the duration of the war is simply a question of continued

supply of food for the people and the army. The South can hold out indefinitely if at the eleventh hour she does succeed. The Richmond congress can bring her to subjugation in six months more by conscripting the present producing classes and thrusting them into an unclad and unfed army."

The *Examiner* of February 8th said: "It seems already settled that the enemy's present army organization must go to pieces, and after the spring campaign we should have demoralized armies to fight. The campaign of 1864 will open under the most encouraging auspices for the South. Our armies will be stronger, better armed, and better disciplined than ever before. The enemy is completely ignorant of our plan of operations. We have Smith and Magruder instead of Holmes west of the Mississippi; Polk instead of Pemberton in the southwest; Johnson, instead of Bragg or Longstreet in Tennessee; Beauregard triumphant on the southern seaboard, and Lee invincible in Virginia."

Yes, the Army of the Potomac began the campaign in 1864, practically where it had begun that of 1861.

The *Richmond Whig* of the 8th, said: "We venture to predict that a rout more disastrous than the Bull Run stampede awaits the yankees in most of the conflicts likely to occur during the next campaign. They will have to enter upon it with all the disadvantages of raw levies, who will present but a poor bulwark against the gallant veterans of Lee and Johnson. The Bull Run stampeders were veterans compared with the material which will compose the new army. We see no ground to presume the yankees will bring into the field a larger force than we will. If they do it must of necessity be of such material as cannot, if multiplied in the disproportion of ten to one, counterbalance the overpowering advantage which we shall possess in a well disciplined army. No results, however palpably achieved, by our arms, can be received as an index of what is to come when we have greenhorns to encounter."

It was the duty of the southern press, under the stress of

conditions brought largely upon the South through its influence, to whistle hilariously while the so-called Southern Confederacy was groping in midnight darkness through a foreshadowing graveyard. In the light of what actually took place in 1864, the foregoing extracts, especially that from the *Whig* make a curious study in the psychology of a waning cause.

Our regiment, the Twenty-first Wisconsin Infantry was attached to the first brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General W. P. Carlin, of the first division, commanded by Brigadier-General Richard W. Johnson, of the fourteenth army corps, commanded by Major-General John M. Palmer. During the campaign, General Johnson succeeded General Palmer as corps commander, and he was succeeded by Brigadier-General Jefferson C. Davis, who continued in command of it until the close of the war. The promotion of General Johnson made General Carlin commander of the division, and Colonel Anson G. McCook, being the senior colonel, became commander of the brigade. At the beginning of the campaign, nine regiments composed the brigade, viz.: One Hundred and Fourth Illinois, Forty-second Indiana, Eighty-eighth Indiana, Fifteenth Kentucky, Second Ohio, Thirty-third Ohio, Ninety-fourth Ohio, Tenth and Twenty-first Wisconsin. The Tenth Wisconsin and the Second Ohio dropped out about July 28th, by reason of expiration of service. During the campaign there were only two commanders in succession of the Twenty-first Wisconsin; Lieutenant-Colonel Hobart and Major M. H. Fitch.

The campaign opened on the 8th of May at Rocky Face Ridge, which covers Dalton on the north. The enemy was posted on the ridge in an impregnable position. Our brigade moved forward in line of battle to a position on the ridge about one-half mile southwest of Buzzard Roost. On the 9th, the Thirty-third Ohio and our regiment moved farther to the right, trying for the top of the ridge, but found the enemy too strongly posted to make a passage. We received the fire of the enemy at every point approached. These demonstrations were continued during the 10th and 11th, to hold the enemy on the ridge while McPherson, with the Army of the Tennessee, was passing through Snake Creek Gap, several miles to the right, to get in rear of the enemy and cut him off. But McPherson failed to do this, and Sherman said that he lost the opportunity of his military career. We understood at the time that General Thomas urged General Sherman to let the Army of the Cumberland make this flank movement, but instead McPherson was ordered. It was a complete failure.

On the 12th, we followed through the same gap, finally taking position on the night of the 13th on the left of General Ward's brigade of Butterfield's division of the twentieth corps. We were then in the woods near Resacca, Georgia. The battle of Resacca, so far as regards the twenty-first, really began that night of the 13th while we lay in bivouac. All the troops of our division had halted in close column of regiments, stacked arms and lay down by the stacks wrapped in their blankets, and were soon fast asleep, except an occasional sentinel, "treading his measured

beat." They were suddenly awakened by a rush as of a charge of cavalry. In an instant every man was on his feet and in line. It proved to be only a poor old horse with a raw place on his back as large as a tin plate, which belonged to an officer (a chaplain), in an adjoining regiment. He had broken loose, and hoping to escape from being ridden the next day, made a rush through the camp. To the half awakened soldier, he appeared a regiment of cavalry. There was great commotion for a few minutes, a few muttered oaths, a wondering how he could do that without treading on a hundred men and knocking down fifty stacks of arms; then the men laughed at the ridiculous side of it, lay down and all was silent again. Then some wag, thinking to have yet a little more sport out of so prolific a subject, grasping at anything to drive away the dreary thoughts of the coming battle of the morrow, awakened the echoes of the grand old woods by yelling at the top of his voice, "Here comes that d——d old horse again." The effect can be imagined. In one time and two motions, every man was on his feet, but no horse came. It was a false alarm. There were some vigorous inquiries for the wag, but he was exceedingly discreet, and escaped the vengeance of his comrades. That apparition of the ghostly regiment of cavalry on the charge, opened the battle of Resacca to the twenty-first regiment.

At daylight on the morning of the 14th, the line of battle was formed. I was detailed by General Carlin to command the skirmish line of the brigade. There was a detail of men from each regiment under command of an officer.

Lieutenant La Count of K Company commanded those from the twenty-first. I deployed the men in front of the line of battle about two hundred yards, and commenced the movement through the thickest underbrush I ever saw. Our brigade was formed in two lines. The twenty-first was in the front one. We soon encountered the enemy's skirmishers, but in the thick brush, it was slow work. Our men were being shot down in ambush, as it were, when a circumstance happened that soon cleared the woods, but not until many men were hit. The line of battle in our rear followed us at a short distance. It was instructed to dress to the right. The regular brigade was on our left. The Twenty-first Wisconsin was the left regiment of our brigade at the time and lay across a hill which brought it in the line of fire of the rebel pickets and some of the men were being hit by shots that were really aimed at the skirmishers. To avoid this, the commander of that regiment, Colonel Hobart, moved its left down to the foot of the hill. This brought the regular brigade, in trying to keep alignment, rapidly into the woods in front and at nearly right angles with the main line of battle. There was short, sharp firing for a moment between them and the rebel pickets, but it cleared the woods of rebels, who took to their heels, and stopped not until they were within their works.

At the time of this movement, I was just riding back through the line of the Fifteenth Kentucky, looking for General Carlin to ask for reinforcements for the skirmish line, when Colonel M. C. Taylor of the Fifteenth Kentucky ran

to meet me, and congratulated me on clearing the front so expeditiously. He perhaps did not know to the day of his death how it was done, and I did not until after the battle.

The line was then moved rapidly through the woods, went down a sudden declivity to a fordable creek that flowed at its foot and at ten o'clock A. M., looking across an open field beyond, beheld the rebel line of works. In an instant, the rebels fired a volley at us. Several enlisted men were killed and wounded by this first fire and the colors were shot down. Their musketry and artillery fully swept the open field. It looked as if it were sure death to any one who ventured beyond the creek. I instructed the skirmish line to keep up a fire from the protection of the timber that fringed the creek until the main line came up. (The skirmishers became a part of the main line, and my duties as commander of skirmishers practically ended.) I immediately reported the situation to General Carlin. He gave me no orders, but brought up the main line and planted a battery on the high ground from which the rebel works were shelled. Here, I believe, a charge was ordered, but only a few men went as far as one hundred yards in that open field, and these were compelled to protect themselves behind stumps and depressions in the ground, so terrific was the musketry firing. They could be relieved only when darkness came and another brigade took the place of ours.

The killed in this battle were Harlow W. Hilton and Francis McKernan of A Company; Andrew Clausen, B Company; Lewis H. Sykes, D Company; Thomas Ginty,

Charles H. Ranney and William Stanfield, G Company; Alfred E. Hobbs, F Company; Thomas Atridge and Gustave Kenne, K Company; Lewis N. Bell, I Company. Died of wounds, Thomas Mulaney, C Company. Twelve killed and died of wounds. There were forty-one wounded. Among the wounded was Lieutenant Harding of G Company, who was wounded at the creek in the shoulder, and afterwards had his arm amputated. Among those who made the charge through the open field, none went farther than brave Lieutenant Hubbard of Company C.

General R. W. Johnson, in his report of this battle said :

“My division began to move at nine o'clock, precisely, May 14th. The advance was necessarily slow owing to the extreme ruggedness of the ground passed over, the dense underbrush and the necessity for deliberation on my part, in order that the troops to the extreme left might follow the movements. My left having swung around by a march of something like one mile, I found the enemy strongly posted and fortified on the hither slope, and near the crest of a long elevated ridge. . . . In front of their position was an open field of some four hundred yards wide, sloping gradually down to a creek directly in my front. . . .”

After halting his division on this creek, awaiting instructions until 11:30 A. M., he continues,

“General Carlin who lay very near the creek mentioned threw forward his skirmishers, driving those of the enemy within their works” (this was done before we halted at the creek) “and moved forward his lines across the creek. No sooner had his first line emerged from the cover of the woods than the enemy—infantry and artillery—opened upon it with terrible effect. Notwithstanding this, however, Carlin pushed forward both lines across the creek and nearly half way across the open field. The passage of the creek had, however, sadly disordered his lines and finding it im-

possible to reform them while advancing so rapidly as the emergency of the occasion required ; hopeless moreover of holding his position even if the assault should succeed, Carlin fell back to the cover of the creek, the eastern bank of which offered in some places all the protection of a well constructed fortification. Here, he remained by my directions all day. . . . In this affair, General Carlin's brigade suffered severely, losing considerably over two hundred in killed and wounded."

The battle of Resacca was not one of the great battles of the war, but it was a very bloody one on our side. It might have been very different in results had McPherson's army taken a line across the railroad and burnt the bridge when his troops first struck Resacca. After the rebel army fell back from Dalton and entrenched on a line of hills at Resacca, it was a mere waste of life to charge them in front as it was afterwards at Kenesaw. Nothing was accomplished during the whole of the Atlanta campaign by direct charges on earthworks. Flanking did the work, and would have done it just as effectively at Resacca. It was not a decisive battle and in the nature of things could not be, because when defeated, they could readily fall back to another position.

The rebels evacuated their position here on the night of the 15th. May 16th, we moved to the town of Resacca, thence to Cassville where we went into camp at noon on the 20th and remained there three days. Here the men drew rations and clothing. While here on the 21st, I wrote as follows :

"I have nothing with which to write but a pencil. We are about eighty miles south of Chattanooga, close on the heels of the rebs whom we have driven from two very strong positions. We rested part of yesterday and last night, dur-

ing which time the enemy has, of course, got out of reach, unless he concludes to make a stand at Alatoona Mountains, fifteen or twenty miles south of here, the only place he can stand this side of Atlanta."

This assertion proved to be a mistake. He stood six days on Pumpkin Vine Creek, three weeks at Kenesaw Mountain and seventeen days on Chattahoochee River. General Joseph E. Johnston knew much better how to delay the inevitable, than did a major of infantry on the Union side.

"Atlanta is about fifty-five miles from here. The great blunder in this campaign was in letting the enemy retreat from Resacca. They should have been kept there and the contest ended at once." (This refers to the failure of McPherson to occupy Resacca ahead of the rebel army.) "May 14th, our regiment with three others, the Second, Thirty-third, and Ninety-fourth Ohio, supported by four regiments in line behind us charged the works at Resacca. The charge failed for want of more uniformity of action in the whole division, and fifty-three of our regiment paid for the folly, in being killed and wounded. I commanded the line of skirmishers that preceded the charge and had out of four companies deployed, about fifteen killed and twenty-five wounded. It was pretty hot, but as usual I escaped without a scratch.

"We have received the news up to the 10th from the Potomac. Before I can make up my mind to a great victory on our part there" (meaning that the dispatches announced a victory in the Wilderness for Grant), "I shall wait to know the end of the campaign. Of course we can rejoice that it is as well as it is; but when an army starts to take Richmond or to annihilate Lee's army, it is defeated if the object fail." (It did not fail, but it was many months before Richmond was captured and Lee's army surrendered.) "I am writing this on a drum head in bivouac but as soon as we get into camp somewhere, I will write again in ink. I think we shall never get any more rest with Sherman

as commander. It is difficult to tell why we are lying still now, and all begin to chafe at the delay. It looks as though the pursuit was given up. I hope we shall move on until Atlanta is in our possession, or the rebel army is annihilated."

We did move on and captured Atlanta, but it was General Thomas who was to annihilate the rebel army. This he did at Nashville in December, 1864, after Sherman had made the march to the sea.

We marched from Cassville on the 23d, and on the 26th arrived at Brown's Mills, three miles from Dallas, Georgia, passing through Burnt Hickory on the way. The enemy being near, our command moved in battle array in two lines to a point on Pumpkin Vine Creek, near Pickett's Mills. The night of May 27th was very dark. The regiment was led into position by a staff officer. The men lay on their arms until morning, when it was discovered that a rebel deserter had come into the line of the twenty-first during the night, and lay there in the morning with his musket, and accoutrements on his person. He said he had come in from our rear, and the rebel forces were there. We were facing away from the enemy. The regiment was immediately countermarched. Company E, commanded by Captain Weisbrod was deployed as skirmishers. They gallantly drove the enemy from a wooded ridge a few rods away, and our line was established on this ridge.

On the 28th, we were formed in a single line along this ridge. We remained here close to the enemy, firing and under fire, until June 6th. Hood's corps attacked this line on May 30th, but was repulsed.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN (*Continued*)

The movement from Dallas to Kenesaw—Kenesaw Mountain from June 19th to July 3d—Skirmishing from Kenesaw, past Marietta to Chattahoochee River—A long delay at the Chattahoochee—The Battle of Peach Tree Creek—In front of Atlanta July 25th to August 26th—The Twenty-first not in the battles of the 22d and 28th of July—It made a charge August 7th, capturing some prisoners, but losing thirteen wounded—Atlanta flanked and fight at Jonesboro—City occupied by Union army, September 8th—List of losses—Author's official report of the campaign.

ON June 9th, I wrote as follows :

“The army to-day is lying still near a little town on the Chattanooga and Atlanta railroad, called Ackworth, a hundred miles from Chattanooga, and thirty-eight north of Atlanta. With the exception of a little marching, we have been quiet for a few days, but will go for the rebs to-morrow at 6 A. M., and will again find them three or four miles from here in an intrenched position. Three times since leaving Ringold, have they been forced to fall back from strong intrenchments. Our regiment came in contact with them the last time, May 27th, and continued in the line without being relieved six days, holding the rebels back from our main line with skirmishers one hundred and fifty yards from the rebel works and constantly firing upon their main line. This was at Pumpkin Vine Creek. Their skirmishers could not see our main line. The brigade commander, General W. P. Carlin, highly complimented our regiment for their endurance and bravery. We lost four killed and twenty-four wounded, making a total of seventy-six struck, since commencing the campaign, out of three hundred and fifty. I am very well to-day. Have just returned from Department Headquarters, trying to learn the latest news.

"They have none." (And I might have added, would not give it if they had.) "In the papers we get from the north, which are very few, little is said concerning the movements of this army. All eyes seem to be directed to Grant. That is proper enough. The great blow must be struck there. This movement is only secondary, but nevertheless important. Both will succeed, and the military power of the rebellion be crushed this campaign. I hope it may come quickly. I think the siege of Richmond will last some weeks, but we can walk over or around anything in our front."

The enemy very gradually retired from Dallas. The twenty-first regiment from June 6th until the 17th, in connection with the rest of the brigade cautiously moved after them, always in line of battle and preceded by skirmishers. The retreat of General Joseph E. Johnston during the whole of the Atlanta campaign was masterly. His object was to avoid a battle, except when he was certain to inflict loss on us and get away. He was greatly outnumbered and could not afford to meet Sherman in an open field on equal terms.

I wrote on the 22d of June as follows :

"June 22, 1864—9 A. M.

"We are in line of battle at Kenesaw Mountain, and skirmishing constantly. At this moment, the artillery on both sides is playing backwards and forwards, and men are being killed almost every day. We had one man killed by a cannon shot yesterday. We have been thus since I last wrote you. Two or three days ago with about one hundred men, I charged upon the enemy's skirmish line posted in a line of rifle pits, took fourteen prisoners, several stands of arms, drove them into their main line and established our line within three hundred yards, notwithstanding the general ordered us to fall back as soon as I ascertained their main

works. When I went to report to the general he thanked me for what had been done. The whole line of the army was moved forward, and during the night, the rebels fell back from that line to this point. We have been fighting every day for more than a month, and yet there is no prospect of cessation. It is yet some twenty-five miles to Atlanta."

Fortunately we were not in the celebrated assault of June 27th at Kenesaw Mountain. Our position was some distance to the right of that. The troops who made that assault, "merely to show to the rebels and to the country that this army would fight," as General Sherman said, were hurled to bloody destruction. When General Joseph E. Johnston took a position, it could not be carried by direct assault. Flanking only did the effective work on this campaign.

The position at Kenesaw Mountain having been evacuated by the enemy on July 3d, we followed through Marietta, and on the 5th, the whole army was in pursuit. McPherson was some miles to the right.

When the head of our brigade came to a certain forks of two roads, General Sherman and General Thomas were standing there with a bearer of dispatches to McPherson. They sent the Tenth and Twenty-first Wisconsin, under my command on the right fork road with the bearer of dispatches, to open communication with McPherson. I threw out skirmishers in advance and moved rapidly down the road, being fired on from the start. We had killed two of the enemy and taken two prisoners when suddenly we brought up against the rebel army entrenched on the north

bank of the Chattahoochee River. Our detachment went into line of battle, reported the situation back to the brigade commander, received some reinforcements and remained there until three o'clock that day. We were relieved by the whole second division of the fourth corps which in seventeen days occupied that same position, getting no nearer McPherson nor the rebel line. I do not know what became of that dispatch bearer. The road taken by the detachment proved to be the main road to Atlanta, upon which the rebel army had retired, while the Army of the Cumberland had taken a by-road.

*"Chattahoochee River, Ga.,
"July 7, 1864.*

"The reason letters do not reach the north sooner than three weeks, is that the mails must be retained at some point for a sufficient length of time to allow the movements then in contemplation, to be accomplished; otherwise the northern press would publish prematurely some important marches and manœuvres. We are now within ten miles of Atlanta, on a hill from which we can plainly see the houses of the doomed city. The army passed through Marietta some days ago, and had a fight three miles this side in which our regiment under my command was deployed as skirmishers. I am now in command of the regiment, Colonel Hobart being in command of the left wing of the brigade. We are still fighting, the rebels disputing every inch of the ground. But it is very little use for them to contest much longer. We are bound to go to Atlanta. The artillery is roaring on the right. It must be some flank movement, in which case the enemy will light out from our front. He occasionally sends a bullet, even where I am writing."

The part taken by the regiment in the battle of Peach Tree Creek is sufficiently described in the official report

of the campaign, hereafter given. In further explanation of that fight, I will say that our regiment was in line "en echelon" with the Tenth Wisconsin and One Hundred and Fourth Illinois, on a wooded hill above them. Hearing firing in the distance, I had cautioned the men to be in readiness for an engagement, and then went down the hill in front of the regiment, the better to observe the probable approach of the enemy. The timber obstructed the view from the position of the regiment. The men could not see me on account of the timber and underbrush. I was thinking just how I should receive the rebel line that was surely approaching, when the regiment commenced moving towards me. McCook and Hobart had come up to the regiment from behind, and not finding me, asked where I was. The men said I had gone down in front. In their excitement, these two officers did not come to my position, but Hobart gave the command, "Forward! March!" When the regiment reached me, I was greatly surprised, but immediately assumed command, and double-quickened the men into the hollow in front, and up the hill beyond. The rebel charge had really exhausted itself by this time. Their line melted away when counter-charged, like mist before the morning sun.

"Near Atlanta, Ga.,

"July 25, 1864.

"This is a fine bright morning, and I feel well. There was a little fight last night, but it amounted to nothing. It was announced in the northern papers a few days since that we were in Atlanta. It was a mistake. The rebel army this morning occupies the edge of the city, and we are facing

them, firing into it. Skirmishing is going on all the time and perhaps in a day or two we shall be in possession ; but Sherman has an unfortunate habit of making premature announcements. This is a most wretched country, uncultivated and uninhabited. All along the path of the army the inhabitants have all fled, leaving scarcely a sign of life behind. Lower Georgia must be crowded with refugees. From our position, we can look into the city of Atlanta, and every five minutes a twenty pounder parrott sends the Johnnies the compliments of the day. . . . Our corps badge is an acorn—red for our division, white for the second and blue for the third."

*" Near Atlanta, Ga.,
" July 30, 1864.*

" I have just come in from the front line and write this in the quartermaster's tent in the rear. I am going to return as soon as I can, for no one is there to command in my absence. . . . The regiment has been quiet except on the skirmish line since the battle of Peach Tree Creek. The two late battles have been fought, that of the 22d on the left, and that of the 28th, on the right of us, but Atlanta has yet to fall and we may be compelled even to-morrow to make a bloody record."

The advance from the battle-field of Peach Tree Creek to the defenses of Atlanta was slow. On August 3d, General Carlin returned and assumed command of the brigade. He had been absent on leave. On August 7th, the brigade itinerary recites, "The line was advanced about five hundred yards to a hill west of Utoy Creek, about two hundred yards from the enemy's main line. In gaining possession of this hill, the brigade carried two lines of rifle pits under a heavy fire from the enemy. . . . The second line was carried by the Twenty-first Wisconsin, which regiment also lost several men. After the hill was carried,

the enemy opened a heavy fire of shell and canister on our line, from a battery in his main works, which lasted nearly two hours, killing and wounding several officers and men."

"Near Atlanta, Ga., August 10, 1864.

"Don't you think that it has been a long time since it was announced that Atlanta was taken? And yet, we are fighting for it with no more apparent success than ever. We have been shifting our position every day, and almost every night, digging trenches, always under the fire of the enemy until the army is completely worn out, like a superannuated dray horse. Twenty days have we been fighting the battle of Atlanta, and nothing yet gained. We were in the fight—that is, the attack—of August 7th, and captured several prisoners, with a loss in wounded of thirteen, including Captain Turner. . . . The most of Stoneman's cavalry is reported captured." (This referred to Stoneman's celebrated raid in which he lost nearly his whole command.)

August 12th, the itinerary goes on to say—"Before day-break this morning, the Twenty-first Wisconsin was withdrawn from the front line to the rear, on the hill near McKnight's battery."

Very sensibly, General Sherman concluded not to repeat at Atlanta, the disastrous assaults of Resacca and Kenesaw. Instead, the army on the 26th of August moved around the left of the enemy's position in military order, always presenting towards the enemy, a line of battle. Part of the army was always in position to meet an attack, while the marching troops were passing with the wagon trains in the rear of the battle line. The twentieth corps was left in front of Atlanta, covering the railway and bridge over the Chat-tahoochee towards our base at Chattanooga.

On September 2d, our brigade reached Jonesboro, a town on the south of Atlanta and directly in the rear of the rebel army. The next day Atlanta was evacuated by Hood, who in July had succeeded Johnston in command of the rebel army.

*“ Camp Near Jonesboro, Ga.,
“ September 4, 1864.*

“Atlanta has been evacuated and we are here, twenty miles below, waiting until we find what the rebels are doing and where they are going, and then perhaps we may return to Atlanta or thereabouts. . . . Atlanta was taken by a flank movement around the left of Hood's army, striking the Macon railroad at this point. There was a brilliant fight in which our corps charged the rebel works and took about one thousand prisoners. Our brigade was not in it.”

Our brigade arrived within two miles of Atlanta on September 8th, and went into camp, just four months from the opening of the campaign at Rocky Face Ridge on May 8th.

The loss in killed and wounded, excluding the missing by capture, in the Army of the Cumberland, was a little over nineteen thousand; in the fourteenth corps, five thousand six hundred and forty-one; in the first division, two thousand one hundred and sixteen; in the first brigade, six hundred and ninety-nine; in the Twenty-first Wisconsin, one hundred and nine.

My official report of this campaign is published on page 555 of part 1, volume 38, of the “Official Records of the Rebellion,” and is as follows :

"Headquarters 21st Wis. Vol. Inf.

"Near Jonesboro, Ga., Sept. 5, 1864.

"CAPT. J. W. FORD,

"A. A. A. G.,

"1st Brigade, 1st Division,

"14th A. C.

"CAPTAIN :

"I have the honor to make the following report of the operations of this regiment during the campaign commencing May 7th at Ringold, Ga., and ending September 8, 1864, at Atlanta, Ga.

"May 7th—Moved south towards Buzzard Roost, and at Tunnel Hill, formed line of battle but met with no enemy. May 9th—By order of General Carlin, this regiment and the Thirty-third Ohio, Lieutenant-Colonel Montgomery, both under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Hobart, made a reconnaissance of the western face of Rocky Ridge south of the gap, for the purpose of gaining the crest. After passing with much caution along the base of the ridge for a mile, skirmishers from both regiments were deployed and the ascent began. The regiments advanced behind the skirmishers and halted when the latter had gained the foot of an almost perpendicular crest, on the upper edge of which the rebel skirmishers were posted. The ascent being there found impracticable, the detachment was ordered back by General Carlin. Several shots were exchanged and one rebel hit. No casualties to this regiment.

"May 12th—Moved through Snake Creek Gap towards Resacca, and on the 14th, the brigade being formed in two lines near Resacca, the twenty-first being the third regiment in the front line, at ten o'clock, A. M., the movement against the enemy began. One company, K, was on the skirmish line and skirmished very heavily with the enemy for about one-half mile through thick underbrush, and in a very hilly woods. The enemy's skirmishers were driven from the woods and across an open field, beyond a tortuous creek into their main line of works. This regiment, with the others in the brigade were formed near the edge of the wood on a high bank of this creek, in the same order in which they had advanced, and by order General Carlin, commanding brigade charged through the creek and across

the open field upon the enemy's works, which were distant about three hundred yards. The creek in many places was waist deep to the men, and in moving through, the ranks were very much broken. In this broken condition it emerged into the open field under a most galling fire from the enemy, in which it was impossible to again reform. In the impetuosity of the charge, many men went ahead of the regiment, but were compelled to take shelter after advancing about half-way across the field where they encountered another branch, and those behind, seeing the hopelessness of gaining the enemy's works, took protection behind stumps and whatever offered protection. The most of the regiment during the afternoon fell back to the creek, and remained there under the shelter of a temporary work made of rails, from which they kept up a fire upon the enemy that kept them close under their works until after dark when those yet in the open field joined them, and the regiment was relieved, and retired with the balance of the brigade to the rear to bivouac during the night. In this engagement, the regiment lost in killed, nine men ; and wounded, two officers, Second Lieutenants Harding and Fargo, both commanding companies, and thirty-six men." (It was subsequently disclosed that the loss in killed and wounded was fifty-three.)

"The enemy having evacuated Resacca on the night of the 15th of May, the regiment moved with the brigade in all its marches, and went into position with it on Pumpkin Vine Creek, near Dallas, Ga., May 27th. May 28th—Two companies of this regiment, under Captains Weisbrod and Edwards drove the enemy's skirmishers from a very strong position on a wooded ridge, and established our skirmish line on a crest still 200 yards in advance, and within that distance of the enemy's main line. The regiment took position on the crest from which the enemy's skirmishers had been driven. May 30th—About six o'clock, p. m., that part of the line on which the twenty-first was posted was attacked by part of Hood's corps, which advanced from their main works in line of battle. The skirmish line drove them back, and those of this regiment took one wounded prisoner. Three dead rebels were left in front of the skirmish line of the regiment.

"This position was held until June 2d, when the regiment was relieved by the One Hundred and Fifth Ohio, of a brigade from General Baird's division. We had been constantly skirmishing with the enemy for six days and most of the time the rebels and ours were occupying the summit of the same ridge, within thirty yards of each other, firing constantly. During these six days skirmishing, lost four men killed and twenty-four wounded.

"June 6th—Marched within three miles of Ackworth, and changed position from day to day with the brigade. When near Big Shanty, June 17th, the skirmish line of the brigade became again heavily engaged with the enemy, driving him about one-half mile.

"June 18th—The skirmish line of the brigade of which fifty men from this regiment formed a part charged upon the enemy's rifle pits and drove his skirmishers into the main line, capturing thirteen prisoners, of whom the skirmishers of the twenty-first took seven. The enemy, that night abandoned his position and fell back to Kenesaw Mountain, and the regiment moved up and took position at that place. Here the movements of the regiment are identical with those of the brigade, changing position as ordered from one part of the line of the army to the other, constantly under fire from the enemy's artillery, and a part of the regiment nearly every day on the skirmish line. In the night of July 2, 1864, the enemy again evacuated his position. During this engagement, lost three killed and three wounded.

"July 3d—Marched through Marietta, Ga., and went into camp about three miles south of that place.

"July 4th—This regiment was deployed as skirmishers, covering the brigade, and advanced about one mile south, where they came upon the enemy's works, and became sharply engaged with his skirmishers, driving them.

"July 5th—The enemy fell back to the Chattahoochee, and this brigade proceeded the same day. Having advanced about two miles, this regiment under Major M. H. Fitch, and the Tenth Wisconsin Infantry under Captain Roby, the detachment being commanded by the former officer, were sent, by order of Colonel McCook commanding brigade, on a road leading to the right from the main col-

umn for the purpose of opening communication with General McPherson's column, which was moving south parallel with this column, and west of it. The detachment, preceded by skirmishers, advanced about two miles when it came upon part of the line of rebel works at the Chattahoochee River, behind which the enemy was posted in force. The road upon which it had moved is the main thoroughfare from Marietta to Atlanta. The rebel skirmishers were driven during the whole march. The detachment took position at the forks of a road, nine and one-half miles from Atlanta, and being relieved about 3 P. M. by General Davis' division, joined the brigade in position east of it about one mile, having killed two rebels and taken two prisoners. No casualties occurred to the detachment.

"July 17th—Advanced across the Chattahoochee River, skirmishers from the regiment engaging and driving those of the enemy, every day until the 20th of July, when the regiment lying in the second line of the brigade on the crest of a hill, near Peach Tree Creek was ordered by Colonel McCook, commanding brigade, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hobart, commanding second line, to move down the hill into the ravine and take position. At this time—about four o'clock, P. M., a rebel line of battle had attacked most furiously the One Hundred and Fourth Illinois on the northern face of the hill, beyond the ravine into which the twenty-first was ordered, but the order not having been given to the commanding officer of this regiment, and he, supposing the order was to move in support of the One Hundred and Fourth Illinois against the rebels, charged upon the double-quick up the hill, to the right of that regiment, the rebels falling back at the beginning of the movement, before the twenty-first reached the position, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. In this affair, the regiment lost three wounded.

"July 21st—At 7 P. M., moved south one mile and threw up heavy earthworks, but July 22d, at daylight, the rebels having again fallen back, advanced to Atlanta and took position on the north side of that city.

"August 7th—The regiment having in the meantime moved towards the right of the position of our army, about four o'clock, P. M., General Carlin ordered two companies

of this regiment to be deployed against the rifle pits occupied by the enemy's skirmishers, the first division of the regiment commanded by Captain Henry Turner was moved forward, and they were supported in a few minutes by the second division under Captain Edwards. These two divisions moved gallantly, but met with such stubborn resistance, that the remaining six companies were thrown forward upon the charge when the rebel pits were carried, and several prisoners taken, among whom was a rebel captain. The regiment lost thirteen wounded, among whom was Captain Turner of D Company. This movement gave a good position for the main line to occupy, within one hundred and fifty yards of the enemy's works, which was held until August 21st at eight o'clock, P. M., when the regiment moved with the brigade around the left flank of the rebel army.

"August 28th—Came to the Montgomery Railroad, six miles west of East Point. August 29th—Deployed as skirmishers in front of the brigade; moved east upon the Montgomery Railroad, driving rebel cavalry about two miles, and moved back same day to point of departure. From that date until the present, our movements have been merely marches, with the single exception of the retreat in the face of the enemy, and in line of battle on September 6th, when our skirmishers were engaged with the enemy, and one man was reported missing.

"The total casualties to the regiment during the campaign are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Killed | 19 |
| Wounded | 90 |
| Prisoners | 3 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | 112 |

"Very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"M. H. FITCH,

"Major Com'd'g,

"Twenty-first Wis. Vol."

CHAPTER XVII

JUST BEFORE THE MARCH TO THE SEA

The author procured leave of absence and went north from Atlanta—Hood's raid to the rear followed by Sherman—Author returned from leave and joined the army at Kingston—Muster in as Lieutenant-Colonel—Futile effort to prevent Twenty-first going on march to the sea—The vote in the regiment and brigade for President—Chaplain carries \$27,000 north for the men.

AFTER the capture of Atlanta, I procured a leave of absence for thirty days and went north, September 26, 1864. The principal reason for asking this leave was not given in the application. I do not propose to give it here. But after the war, Major C. H. Walker said to my wife when introduced to her, "I am glad to meet the only lady in my knowledge who married a soldier during the war and did not spoil him." This was the second and last leave I had in the army. While I was away, Hood, who had succeeded Johnston in command of the rebel army, made his famous raid in rear of the Union army, and was closely followed by most of Sherman's forces on October 3d, the twentieth corps being left at Atlanta.

The Twenty-first Wisconsin Infantry, commanded by Captain Charles H. Walker, took part in this campaign, which lasted from October 3d to October 21st. At the latter date, it went into camp at Gaylesville, Ala., where it remained until the 28th of October, and then marched back

to Rome, Ga., and from there, on the 2d of November, to Kingston, Ga.

The marching on that campaign was rapid and arduous, but the twenty-first had no fight with the enemy. The rebel army moved too fast to be caught. I arrived at Chattanooga on October 28th, on my return to the regiment from my leave of absence, and found Colonel Hobart there. The regiment was then on the march between Gaylesville, Ala., and Rome, Ga. At that time I did not know where the regiment was and therefore remained in Chattanooga. General Thomas then had his headquarters in Chattanooga, having left Atlanta September 29th. Colonel Hobart was at work, trying to accomplish three things :

1st—The transfer of seventy-five men from the Tenth Wisconsin Infantry, which was about to be mustered out, to the twenty-first.

2d—To be mustered as colonel at Chattanooga before going to the regiment. He had his commission in his possession.

3d—To get an order from General Thomas transferring the twenty-first from the front to the post at Chattanooga.

He easily accomplished his first object, the transfer of troops. The time of the tenth as to its first enlistment had expired, but seventy-five men who had joined it later were transferred to us to serve out their time. Major Walker preceded the regiment to Marietta and marched forty-five of them into our ranks as we passed that town, November

14, 1864. The other thirty were absent from various causes.

On September 20th, at Atlanta, three hundred and seventy-one men, on paper, of the First Wisconsin, whose terms had not expired, when that regiment was mustered out, were transferred to us. There was quite a rivalry between the Third Wisconsin Infantry, I think it was, and the twenty-first, to procure these men. Colonel Hobart obtained a leave of absence and went to Washington, D. C., on this business. On his way there, he fell in with an officer of the Third Wisconsin Infantry, whose name I do not now recall, and in conversation with him, discovered that he was also on his way to Washington. Conjecturing that he might be on the same errand, Colonel Hobart made some excuse to separate from him at Indianapolis. Hobart took another train, and hurrying to the War Department on his arrival at Washington, procured the order for the transfer and hastened back with it. His superior experience in political matters before the war in Wisconsin gave him a decided advantage in a contest of this kind.

The numbers transferred from the first and tenth, three hundred and seventy-one and seventy-five, respectively, represented merely names upon the rolls, present and absent. Only forty-five joined us from the tenth at Marietta, and two-hundred from the First Wisconsin.

After these transfers, our regiment numbered nine hundred on the rolls, present and absent. I think about four hundred, or perhaps four hundred and fifty were present. They were disciplined and hardened soldiers and made a

fine appearance. For a long time prior to this, Colonel Hobart, Major Walker and myself, as lieutenant-colonel, had held our commissions for the rank of colonel, lieutenant-colonel, and major, but could not be mustered because of the small enrollment of our regiment. Now, we were entitled by these transfers, to muster. Hence it was very important to us that these transfers be procured. Colonel Hobart had been lieutenant-colonel ever since the first organization of the regiment at Oshkosh. On the way to the regiment in October, 1862, from his former regiment, the Fourth Wisconsin, he had stopped to see Colonel Sweet at some point where he lay in a hospital, and generously told him not to resign, and to take all the time he wanted to get well. Colonel Sweet lingered between life and death for months, and when he did resign, having discovered that his wound permanently disabled him for field service, the numbers of the regiment had been so reduced by death and discharges for disability, that no promotions of field officers could be made. An order had been promulgated prior to that time, by the War Department, prohibiting the mustering of field officers and captains under new commissions in regiments below a certain enrollment. Thus it came about that Lieutenant-Colonel Hobart remained lieutenant-colonel for nearly two years before he could be mustered as colonel. For the same reason, Captain Walker, being the senior captain, acted as major, and did not attain the rank until November. We were not mustered until November 6, 1864, at Kingston.

The air was full of rumors that Sherman was going to

leave General Thomas in command at Chattanooga and cut loose, taking with him, the bulk of the army, including the fourteenth corps, then in command of General Jeff C. Davis. To what point Sherman would march, no one could tell. Certain it was he would have no base of supplies, and the wiser course then seemed to Colonel Hobart and myself that the twenty-first regiment should be transferred from the fourteenth corps to the post at Chattanooga, under our old commander. After some considerable effort, the order from General Thomas, making the transfer was obtained. Hobart was on very friendly terms with General Davis, and knowing that Davis would be offended with him for procuring such an order, he arranged with me to carry the order six hours in advance to Kingston and present it to General Davis. As soon as Davis read it, he asked me where Hobart was and seemed very angry. He immediately carried the order to General Sherman and had it countermanded just before the march to the sea began. How short a distance into the future, the human mind can penetrate! At the close of that winter of 1864-5, it was perfectly obvious that the pleasure and welfare of the men and officers of the twenty-first required that instead of trying to be transferred, all our efforts should have been strained to go with Sherman on that picnic to Savannah, because, soon after we started on our march, Thomas' troops had one of the most disagreeable campaigns of the war, and fought two hard battles, those of Franklin and Nashville, while we met no enemy worthy of attention, and lived on the fat of the land—turkeys, pigs, sweet potatoes, hams, chicken, sorghum, apple-

jack, and when we arrived at Savannah, rice and oysters were added as dessert—a little too much rice to the oyster for awhile, but success and salt sea, made amends for that.

In a letter from Chattanooga, dated November 4, 1864, I said :

“This town is one imperial mud hole, and Hobart, when he comes in every night, looks like I imagine, the imperial sow of augury used to appear after a royal wallow.”

I presume I looked the same way. My next letter was as follows :

“*Camp Near Kingston, Ga.*

“*November 9, 1864.*

“I arrived at the regiment November 6th, six hours ahead of Hobart and found everything in good condition. My horse jumped five feet high when I mounted him and rode out. I was mustered as lieutenant-colonel from November 1st. . . . Our regiment was paid yesterday to October 31st. The chaplain will likely go home to carry the money. . . . The army is certainly going off on some expedition that will cut us off from all communication with the world, and there is no knowing when you will hear from me again. Hobart is in command of the brigade, and I am in command of the regiment. Walker has gone down to Marietta to get about seventy-five recruits. . . . Our regiment voted yesterday. There were three hundred and eleven for Lincoln, and eighty-six for Little Mac. The brigade cast ten hundred and fifty-eight votes for Lincoln, and two hundred and eighty-eight for Mac,” (meaning McClellan.)

This was my *au revoir* to the outside world, just before going down with the army of Georgia like a lost river in an underground flow, not to come to the surface again until we reached the Atlantic Ocean, December 12th.

I think it was about \$27,000 that Chaplain O. P. Clinton carried back with him in greenbacks. He rolled them up in his blanket and strapped it tight. He kept this roll either in his hand, or at night, under his head, until he reached his home at Neenah, Wisconsin, and then sent each family of the soldiers the amount due it, according to a list of names and amounts he had taken before leaving the regiment. The blanket was fuller of greenbacks than the ordinary army blanket was of graybacks. It was a great boon to the families of the soldiers to receive the money in this way, and relieved the soldiers themselves, of a burden and a danger of loss on the "march to the sea." When a soldier had much money, there was always a great temptation to either spend it in every town he came to, or to gamble with his comrades.

I looked upon that trip of the chaplain's as a great source of good discipline to the regiment, in thus taking temptation away from the men, and at the same time, carrying joy and comfort to several hundred wives and children in the far away homes of Wisconsin. The fact is, the least duty of a chaplain in the army, was preaching. His usefulness lay in just such acts as this ; in cheering the sick and down-hearted ; visiting the hospitals ; writing letters home for the disabled ; distributing mails ; and generally in looking after the physical, mental and moral welfare of those who were unable by reason of the hard life of an active army, or want of knowledge, or carelessness, or any other cause, to do such things for themselves. Our chaplain was always active and efficient in these lines. His pioneer life in the early days of

Wisconsin especially fitted him for these duties. Unlike a great many other army chaplains, he endured to the end and was with us when the regiment was finally mustered out in June, 1865.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MARCH TO THE SEA

The army leaving Kingston, November 12, 1864, going over the same old route to Atlanta—Marietta burned—Railroad destroyed—Atlanta burning when army started across Georgia, November 15th—Size of army—Its impedimenta—How it subsisted—The line of march—Large number of colored people followed in its wake—December 11th, formed line near Savannah—City occupied by troops under Hardee who resisted our entry until December 20th, and then marched away unhurt—Savannah described.

WE moved from Kingston on the 12th day of November, 1864, going over much of the same ground between that and Atlanta, over which we had fought during the preceding summer. The railroad was entirely destroyed between there and Atlanta. The men soon became experts in that line of work. The march was by way of Cartersville, Alatoona, Ackworth, and Big Shanty. On the 13th, three men were wounded by railroad iron falling on them. On November 14th, we marched from Big Shanty to the Chattahoochee River, on the east side of Kenesaw Mountain, by way of Marietta, where Major Walker met us with the recruits from the Tenth Wisconsin. All the principal buildings around the public square in this town were burning as we passed. General Sherman was standing looking on. When we arrived at Atlanta on the 15th, that city was burning also, and continued to burn all that night. We started towards the east before daylight, on the morning of November 16th,

with the blazing fires of that doomed city behind us to light us on our way.

From the first eminence reached before daylight, I turned my horse's head back to the city, and sat perfectly still watching the magnificent but lurid spectacle. My thoughts ran somewhat thus :

"The meaning of this fire to us is one thing, but to the enemy it has an entirely different meaning. To us it is the emblem of victory—to them, a dragon devouring their vitals; to us it is the light of promise—to them the devourer of hope; to us, it is a pillar of fire guiding our arms through the wilderness to a peaceful Canaan—to them, a flame of Sodom and Gomorrah. War is made up of cruelty and destruction. It destroys in a night what it took years of peaceful industry to construct."

Herbert Spencer, in his "Principles of Sociology," says :

"War, of necessity, cultivates deception; ambush, manœuvring, feints, and the like involve acted lies; the discipline of war, being a discipline in destruction of life, is a discipline in callousness. Whatever sympathies exist, are seared and any that tend to grow are checked."

Yet, he argues that wars have been necessary in the evolution of nations in their present status. We certainly could not avoid *this* war. We could not allow our government to be peaceably divided and the other half set up next door to us, as the only government on the globe organized to perpetuate human slavery. That would be more cruel in its results than war. If there ever was a justifiable war on the part of the Union, this one was.

During the campaign to the sea, I find that I kept a diary of the march and the appearance of the country. It was kept in a book convenient for the pocket, presented to me by Colonel Von Schroeder, the inspector-general of the fourteenth corps. I wrote no letters until arriving at Savannah. The march was so peaceful and leisurely that ample time was given for writing an itinerary. I have that diary now, and think very much of it, as the only one I have ever succeeded in keeping for so long a time, and also in memory of my friend, Colonel Von Schroeder. We seemed to average about fifteen miles a day through a high rolling, sandy, heavily wooded country, not thickly peopled by any means. The farms, called plantations, were numerous enough, and hitherto were remote enough from army visitation, to furnish ample forage and provisions for the wants of our army. It was a land of poultry and sweet potatoes. The actual size of the army that left Atlanta was 63,680 men. Its transportation consisted of 14,468 horses, 19,410 mules, 2,520 wagons, and 440 ambulances. Our regiment had one of these wagons. In the ammunition train, however, we had one wagon for every one hundred men. The supply train started with only four days' grain, but had twenty days' of hard bread and thirty days' of coffee and sugar. General Jefferson C. Davis, who commanded our corps, had serious misgivings about the shortness of the rations, carried in the wagons. The first day out, he watched the foragers pretty closely to see whether the country was going to furnish sufficient to make up the deficiency; but when he saw the soldiers scorn to take red sweet potatoes from the covered

mounds of them in the fields and hunt for white ones, he gave himself no further concern about the supplies. The result proved that his fears were groundless. The army was perhaps never so well fed as on that march. As showing how the animals were fed, Chief Quartermaster L. C. Easton, in his report, said: "The army subsisted on the country twenty-nine days, which makes at least 11,000,000 pounds of grain and 15,000,000 pounds of hay and fodder, taken from the country and consumed on the march." The four corps covered a space of fifty miles wide and marched three hundred miles from Atlanta to Savannah. This is a section of 15,000 square miles of the best part of Georgia. The first day's march was twenty miles to Lythonia. General Sherman rode this first day with our corps. The next day, November 17th, we reached the Oconee River, passing through Conyers which was full of women and children. The next day we passed through Covington. Some rebel papers which fell into our hands stated that Lincoln was elected President at an election held on November 6th.

We marched steadily towards Milledgeville and entered the city November 23d. The diary says, "A house and barn on a plantation owned by Howell Cobb were burned. The country becomes beautiful as Milledgeville is approached, surface rolling, soil sandy but productive, fine farms, poor buildings and plenty of water. There were plenty of sheep, hogs, and sweet potatoes." We left Milledgeville November 24th, marching northeast. The record says, "Planters not very baronial on this road." All day

on the 26th, we were detained by Kilpatrick's train moving on our road, he having gone with his troopers to Millen, about one hundred miles north, to release the Union prisoners confined there. We pointed steadily east, passing in the next few days through Sandersville, Davisboro, Louisville, and crossed the Ogeechee River, November 29th. "Saturday, December 3d, marched in every conceivable direction all day, and at night went into camp near Lumpkin." (I carried a pocket compass.) "Heard to-day that Grant entered Richmond, a week ago."

December 4th, it says, "Nineteen days from Atlanta, but five days' hard bread have been used. The army has subsisted entirely on the country. Last night and this morning heard artillery towards Waynesboro, the first on the campaign, except a little towards Macon the first day. A large number of negroes, principally women, have been allowed to follow in the wake of the army. They were kept back of a certain pontoon bridge, and left until the bridge was taken up. The poor creatures tried to swim and five women were drowned. It is not certain by whose orders they were left." This was an act of cruelty and was reported to Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War. Whether he fastened the responsibility on any particular officer, I do not know. The diary says in one place, "There seems to be scarcely any fruit raised in Georgia, and no Irish potatoes." "December 6th. We are fifty miles from Savannah to-night. A day or two since, some men of the brigade found buried in a pot in the woods (so the story was told) near Lumpkin, about \$200,000 in Confederate money. Many

of the men are playing chuck-a-luck with it at \$500 an ante."

"December 7th—Savannah River has been close on our left all day. Went into line of battle on the 8th, facing to the rear, the cavalry being pressed by Wheeler. On December 11th, encamped in line of battle on the Ogeechee Canal, four miles from Savannah. Can hear occasional shots in direction of Savannah River below city, supposed to be Farragut firing on Fort Jackson. There is a rebel battery within half a mile of our position. Rice in straw the only feed for horses now. Tuesday, December 13th at 4:30 P. M., second division fifteenth army corps took Fort McAllister on the Ogeechee and thus opened communication with the navy, two days less than one month from time of starting from Atlanta. During the night, twenty-seven men came into our brigade lines. They had been Union prisoners, and had enlisted in rebel service in order to be released from confinement, and then deserted."

On December 15th, I wrote the following letter:

"Do you begin to think you will never hear from me? Having gone down like a lost river in the earth, I suppose you have been watching for this army to come to the surface again. Day before yesterday, the fifteenth corps took Fort McAllister, thus opening communication with the fleet, and now at 1:30 P. M., I am informed that a mail wagon will leave brigade headquarters at 3:00, so you see that I have no time to write all the long pages that I intended. I can at least say that our expedition has been the most remarkable one on record" (this is a doubtful statement), "not for the fighting done, but for the entire absence of resistance to the march, and the wonderful fact that we found more for both man and beast than we could possibly devour. We

have all grown fat, and until now our division has not come in contact with the enemy. We are surrounding the city of Savannah, and will undoubtedly take it. I am very well, indeed, and am really glad the regiment came on this expedition." (It will be remembered that we tried to have the twenty-first regiment ordered to remain at Chattanooga.) "We are now beginning to be short of rations, because nothing but rice can be found around here, but the fleet will furnish us. How anxiously I await a letter from you, having received nothing since leaving home (October 24, 1864). We know nothing about the North, except what we have learned from rebel papers and the inhabitants of this country. I suppose that Lincoln is elected and that Congress is in session. Do write me immediately, and send me some papers."

There were many remarkable features about this march across Georgia as stated above, not the least of which was that the highest rebel commanders in Savannah did not know, and would not believe the reports of their own officers, that Sherman was coming with an army of 60,000 troops. When we were within fifteen miles of Savannah, an officer reported to General Hardee, and to General Beauregard who had come to Savannah from Charleston at that time, that Sherman was there with a large army. These officers laughed at the statement and did not believe it. This is very wonderful, considering that our army had marched through the enemy's country and Hardee could easily have learned the facts from the inhabitants without much effort.

The next letter is as follows:

*"Near Savannah, Ga.,
"December 18, 1864.*

"Yesterday came the mail for the first time, and with it two letters. One of these contained the notice of Colonel Sweet but this mail brought us also a fuller notice of the

conspiracy, and also some fine compliments to the colonel—one from Secretary of War. But such things will come to a strong and true manhood like Sweet's. I had just finished a letter to him before the mail arrived, and now I shall open it, and put in something congratulatory." (This has reference to the Chicago conspiracy, heretofore referred to. The journals of the day were full of it, and Colonel Sweet was highly eulogized.)

This letter of December 18th, was a long one, but little of it is of interest now. Here is a specimen paragraph:

"Everything here is perfectly quiet at present. We sit looking at the enemy who is on the opposite side of the swamp. Colonel Hobart has just been here, and ordered me to find out all about my front—what kind of works the enemy has and how they run. I told him I would as soon as the fog rose, which means when I write this letter."

The "March to the Sea" was simply a change of base for our army. It was not nearly as important, from a military point of view, as the campaign immediately succeeding it through the Carolinas. Yet these two campaigns were viewed then by the press and the people of the country, and they are still held by the masses, in the inverse order of their importance. The march to the sea was reckoned by Sherman as one, while that through the Carolinas as ten, or perfect. Yet, the former lives in song and poetry as the romance of war, somewhat as Hooker's battle above the clouds, or Sheridan's ride from Winchester, or the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. The masses prefer the fever of romance to the good health of solid facts.

A staff officer of the brigade came to me on the morning of December 21st, and said the information was that the enemy

had left our front. I sent forward the skirmishers, followed by two companies who quickly occupied the fort in our front. They found two brass twelve-pound howitzers, spiked and the wheels cut. I conjectured that the city must be evacuated because the guns were left, and pushed forward the regiment a mile farther to a farmhouse. Here a deserter came to us and said he had no doubt that the city was evacuated. I at once besieged Colonel Hobart to allow me to move towards the city, and if the enemy was gone, to enter. He finally assented, but too late. After moving rapidly two miles on the main road, the head of the fifteenth corps had a minute before passed and filled the road. So there was nothing to do but countermarch. Next morning under orders, we marched in, but a day after the other corps. A large amount of artillery was found in the works. Our brigade was credited with twelve pieces. Nearly all the inhabitants seemed to have remained. It is said that even the ladies waved their handkerchiefs when the Union boys first came in. That was unusual. Pulaski's monument here is a conspicuous object. The city is full of beautiful little parks. This monument is in one of them. Pulaski fell at the siege of Savannah, by the British, in 1779. On Christmas day, I dined with Colonel Hobart.

Sherman finds many of the men shoeless, without hats, and shabby. But the firm step of the triumphant army through the streets of the city in review, showed that they were not hungry nor emaciated. They had lived well, taken care of their muskets and "kept the powder dry." The streets were full of colored people. One woman said,

“Massa run me away from de Yank for tre year, but dey got me now.” Middle aged gentlemen stood on their marble steps, mothers looked out of the lower story windows, while modest maidens peeped through the curtains up-stairs. The church bells of the city rang on Christmas day, with the same tone to rebel and yankee. They, at least, knew no north and no south.

The Spanish moss that festooned the trees around Savannah was very curious to us. It looks as if it had been caught by the limbs in a wind-storm. Moses Ladd, a Menominee Indian, member of Company B, cut me a pipe from a sweetbrier root. The root was dug from the side of the Ogeechee Canal, where our regiment lay in line. It was beautifully carved.

The chaplain who went to Wisconsin with the money of the men from Kingston, Ga., returned by ocean steamer, here. He says he was at the ladies' fair in Chicago, when the ladies presented Colonel B. J. Sweet with a \$1,000 bond for his suppression of the conspiracy.

While lying at Savannah, the army passed in review through the streets before General Sherman and Secretary of War Stanton, who had come down from Washington for the purpose. In this review, which occurred on December 27, 1864, our regiment carried 368 muskets. There were nineteen officers. It will be remembered that Sherman, in a dispatch, presented Lincoln the city as a Christmas gift. Colonel H. C. Hobart who commanded the brigade on the march was breveted brigadier-general. I was detailed as a wing commander, my wing of the brigade being composed

of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, Major C. H. Walker ; One Hundred and Fourth Illinois, Major Widmer, and the Forty-second Indiana, Major Kellams.

From Atlanta to Savannah, the regiment had only one wagon, but a lot of pack animals. Each regiment fed itself by detailing a permanent foraging party, who would start an hour or two ahead of the regiment and bring supplies to the roadside in the evening, to be distributed when the regiment should arrive. Each forager mounted himself. These "bummers," as they were called, not only constituted the commissariat of the army, but the advance-guard, rear-guard, and skirmishers. They were always well armed, and surrounded the army like a cloud, giving alarm in case of danger, and in nearly every emergency, being able to repulse any ordinary cavalry rangers. Occasionally one would wander beyond support, and get captured, but I think very few casualties occurred compared with the great host of them. Corn and corn-blades were plentiful for the horses and mules.

It was pleasant to be in camp around the beautiful city of Savannah at that time of the year, and in that southern climate. The campaign had not been tedious nor wearisome, but on the contrary, the most pleasant I ever experienced.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CAROLINA CAMPAIGN

The fourteenth corps left Savannah, January 20, 1865—The place of the twenty-first, then in the Army of Georgia, and its roster of officers—Crossed the Savannah River February 4th at Sister's Ferry—The fourteenth corps continued as the left of the army—Did not enter Columbia, marched to the west and north of it—Rapid description of the march to Fayetteville, N. C.—Hardee's forces found occupying Fayetteville—The Battle of Averysboro, March 16th, and Bentonville, March 19th.

THE fourteenth corps left Savannah on the 20th of January, 1865, by the Louisville road, which ran on the south side of the Savannah River, thus forming the extreme left of the Army of Georgia. The first, second, and third,—red, white, and blue divisions of this corps, were commanded respectively, by Brigadier-General Carlin, Brigadier-General Morgan, Brevet Major-General Baird; the first, second and third brigades of the first division, by Brevet Brigadier-General Harrison C. Hobart, Brevet Brigadier-General George Buell, and Colonel Miles. The twenty-first was part of the first brigade, first division, fourteenth army corps, left wing, Army of Georgia.

The twenty-first organization then stood as follows:

Lieutenant-colonel—Michael H. Fitch.

Major—Charles H. Walker.

Surgeon—James T. Reeve.

Adjutant—J. Howard Jenkins.

Quartermaster—S. H. Fernandez.

Chaplain—Orson P. Clinton.

Hospital steward—Edward H. Gould.

Commissary sergeant—George T. Burns.

Company A—Captain, Hiram K. Edwards ; second lieutenant, Watson Cook.

Company B—Captain, James E. Stuart ; first lieutenant, Edgar Vredenburg ; second lieutenant, Edward Dorian.

Company C—Captain, William Wall ; first lieutenant, Robert W. Jackson ; second lieutenant, Hubbard.

Company D—Captain, Henry Turner ; first lieutenant, J. Henry Otto ; second lieutenant, Lyman C. Waite.

Company E—Captain, Fred W. Borchardt ; first lieutenant, Weston ; second lieutenant, Henry Hansen.

Company F—Captain, Milton Ewen ; first lieutenant, Charles H. Morgan ; second lieutenant, Ambrose S. Delaware.

Company G—Captain, James M. Randall ; first lieutenant, William Watson ; second lieutenant, Burnham.

Company H—First lieutenant, Edward T. Midgeley ; second lieutenant, B. French Fuller.

Company I—Captain, Albert B. Bradish ; first lieutenant, C. B. Clark ; second lieutenant, Gustavus Jaeger.

Company K—Captain, Joseph La Count ; first lieutenant, John E. Davies.

Of these, Adjutant Jenkins, Captain Ewen, Lieutenants Morgan, Weston and Hansen were prisoners in Libby Prison since Chickamauga ; Captain William Wall was absent in Wisconsin ; Captains Turner and La Count were on

duty in General Thomas' department in Tennessee; Lieutenant Delaware was detached and on duty as signal officer; Lieutenant Watson was at home on leave of absence, having been recently exchanged from Libby Prison.

The weather was rainy and cold. We did not reach Sister's Ferry, our crossing place, until the 28th. On account of high water and mud and rain, our brigade did not cross the river into South Carolina until February 4th. Supplies were brought up the river to this point by boats. The men and wagons received them here and the commissary train was loaded for the rest of the campaign; at least until Fayetteville, or the Cape Fear River was reached. Arrived at Lawtonville on the 7th. My memorandum says, "The foragers brought in three rebel soldiers who were now home on furlough. The plantations about here are very large, the houses finely furnished. The negroes tell the most doleful stories of cruel treatment. The houses generally are abandoned. Pork, sweet potatoes and chickens plentiful."

I noticed that when we marched without interruption, we made about eighteen miles a day. On the 11th February, we marched through Barnwell, towards White Pond, across the Salkehatche River. General Kilpatrick with his cavalry force was in advance and kept the front clear.

At White Pond we tore up the railway from there to Windsor, towards Augusta. On the march, General Baird's division was ahead of us. At a forks of the road, an officer in blue directed the advance guard to go in a certain direction. Upon being too closely questioned, he turned to

flee, when the men shot him. He had on a rebel uniform under the blue.

Crossed the South Edisto on the 13th towards Columbia, and next day marched across the North Edisto. This is a sandy, pine bearing, rolling country.

February 15th, marched at right angles with previous march and entered Lexington, South Carolina, at 8 P. M. The head of the division struck the enemy's cavalry to-day and captured two men, and two horses. The brigade acted as patrol guard at Lexington. From there we moved towards Columbia, but did not enter the city. On the night of the 17th, we were twenty-two miles northwest of Columbia. Evidently this wing of the army had taken this route so far north and west, to get into a region better supplied and less ravaged by war. It proved to be full of forage for both man and horse. Mules and horses were captured in great numbers. There was no use for wagons on this campaign. Everything, even ammunition, could have been carried by pack mules, and they should have been led by negroes. Each division could be preceded by a mounted advance-guard, and at least a hundred negroes with axes, all under competent officers. Near Winsboro, Cornwallis is said to have once had his headquarters during the Revolution. General Geary occupied Winsboro with his division. It is a fine looking town. We tore up five miles of the track of the Charlotte & Columbia Railway.

On February 22d, Captain Milton Ewen and Lieutenant Charles H. Morgan, both of F Company came into the regiment. They had been prisoners since the battle of

Chickamauga, and had escaped from a train a few days before. On the 23d, we reached the Catawba River at Rocky Mount post-office. The diary said, "We seem now to be marching towards the coast." We had a hard time getting across the Catawba. It is a wide river at this point. It rained for two days and broke the pontoons.

On the 27th, a foraging party of our brigade was attacked about six miles from camp. They escaped with the mules but left the wagons in the hands of the enemy. I went out with the Twenty-first Wisconsin and the Thirty-third Ohio, recovered the wagons, and took two prisoners and two horses. I gave Lieutenant Morgan one of the horses to ride and detailed him as staff officer. By reason of his long imprisonment he was weak and emaciated. At this crossing, the rebels hovered around on the hills, but made no serious attack. The firing became quite lively at the last when only a skirmish line remained to cross. The bridge was taken up after dark and the rear-guard brought over in boats.

After crossing the Catawba, we marched almost directly towards Fayetteville, North Carolina, crossing the Great Peedee River and coming near Chesterfield, entered North Carolina north of that town. Here we struck the turpentine and tar region, passing through miles of pine woods, the trees being tapped like sugar trees in New England. Everything was blackened by the smoke from the burning pines and turpentine mills. March 10th, Kilpatrick and a part of his cavalry were surprised before daylight, three miles north of us, and two hundred were captured. Kil,

patrick escaped. General Baird's division preceded us into Fayetteville situated on the Cape Fear River. Hardee's forces moved out across the Cape Fear River, and burnt the bridges, as our forces entered. It is a beautiful little city of about 10,000 inhabitants, 125 miles northwest of Wilmington, sixty from Goldsboro and sixty from Raleigh. Communication was soon opened with Wilmington by the river, and on March 14th, three boats came up. We sent out the first mail since leaving Sister's Ferry. On the east side of the Cape Fear River at Fayetteville, we found considerable earthworks made by rebels for defense from the seacoast. The enemy who made these works little thought that they would be taken from the west.

We left Fayetteville March 15th, crossing to the east side of the river going towards Goldsboro. The next day at Averysboro, we formed line of battle in presence of the enemy, and had two men of A Company wounded. Some other troops of Slocum's wing had quite a fight here. General Sherman, since leaving Fayetteville rode with this wing until the morning of the 19th of March near Bentonville.

I said in my diary, "Rebs must have retreated towards Raleigh." This was said on the 18th. But the following pages will show what a mistake this was.

THE BATTLE OF BENTONVILLE

Let us make a short retrospect. On the morning of the 19th of March, 1865, our army was in eastern North Carolina between the Cape Fear and the Neuse Rivers, in longitude 78° west of Greenwich, almost directly south of,

and 180 miles from General Grant's army at Petersburg, Va. On the 16th of the preceding November, it had left Atlanta, Ga., in longitude 85°, marched through Milledgeville to Savannah, where it rested, reclothed, and then turned north through South Carolina. It had recently crossed the Cape Fear River at Fayetteville, N. C., turned north as far as Averysboro, where on March 16th, it met a little stronger enemy than usual—Hardee's army from Charleston, but had no difficulty in brushing it out of the way. Had it kept on in the direction it had marched from Fayetteville to Averysboro, it would have reached Raleigh in a short time. But the twenty-third corps, General John M. Schofield commanding, had been sent by water to Newburn and from there by rail to Goldsboro, expressly to meet and support Sherman's army; and General Terry, with his command, the tenth corps, had also come to Cox's Bridge from Wilmington and laid a pontoon for Sherman to cross the Neuse River on his way to Goldsboro, where the united armies could form a new base, rest again as Sherman did at Savannah, reclothe, and again sally forth upon the rear of Lee's fast dwindling forces, by way of Raleigh.

On this bright morning of March 19th, Sherman's army was within twenty-two miles of Cox's Bridge, and expected to march the most of the distance that day. But history says it was several days making that distance. Sherman's army was divided into two wings of two corps each. The right wing under command of General O. O. Howard, was made up of the fifteenth and seventeenth corps; the left wing under General H. W. Slocum, of the fourteenth and

twentieth corps. These wings marched far apart on parallel roads. At this particular time, the first and second divisions of the fourteenth corps were on the main road from Averysboro to Goldsboro, the first division, commanded by General W. P. Carlin, in advance and rapidly approaching Bentonville, a little hamlet about half-way between Fayetteville and Goldsboro. These two divisions numbered about 8,000 soldiers. About eight miles in the rear of them were two divisions of the twentieth corps, beyond an almost impassable swamp. The remaining divisions of the left wing were still farther in the rear, bringing up the wagons and *impedimenta*. General Howard's wing was perhaps fifteen to twenty miles to the south on parallel roads, but marching to the same point, viz. : Cox's Bridge. General Sherman, who had been riding with the left wing for some days, with General Slocum and General Jeff. C. Davis, who commanded the fourteenth corps, sat on his horse by the roadside chatting and watching the troops move away at right shoulder shift. The foragers, whom we called "bummers," and the cavalry had gone ahead. An occasional shot from the front could be heard. The farmer at whose house General Carlin had made his headquarters the night before had said he was afraid a battle would be fought near there, but as he could not or would not give any good reason for his fear, it was unheeded. General A. C. McClurg, chief of staff of the fourteenth corps, afterwards writing of that group, as they sat thus on their horses, said, "Something impressed the soldierly instincts of General Davis with the belief that he was likely to encounter more than the usual cavalry opposi-

tion, and he said as much to General Sherman. The latter, after listening attentively a moment or two, replied in his usual brisk, nervous and positive way, 'No, Jeff, there is nothing there but Dibbrell's cavalry—brush them out of the way. Good-morning—I'll meet you to-morrow morning at Cox's Bridge.' And away he rode with his slender staff, to join Howard and the right wing." It turned out that three days yet lay between us and Cox's Bridge. Now, while General Sherman is riding away from the field of coming battle so confidently and the troops are moving towards Bentonville, let us see what was awaiting them in front, and how unconsciously they were marching into a trap. General Wade Hampton, who on the 16th of January, 1865, had been assigned to the command of all the cavalry opposed to Sherman, in an article written long after for the *Century Magazine* lays bare the then secret movements of the enemy. He says, "Hardee was moving towards Fayetteville, N. C., Beauregard was directing Stevenson's march to Charlotte. Cheatham, with his division from the Army of the Tennessee, had come from Augusta and was moving towards the same point as Stevenson, while the cavalry kept in close observation of the enemy. It was from these widely separated forces that General Joseph E. Johnston, who was assigned to the command of this department, February 23, 1865, had to form the army with which he fought the battle of Bentonville, and his first task was to bring together these detached bodies of troops. Hoke's fine division from the Army of Northern Virginia (Lee's army), also joined him before the fight and rendered gallant and effective service. General Johnston

had united all his available infantry at Smithfield, N. C., and Sherman, whose progress had been entirely unobstructed, except by a spirited fight at Averysboro, made by Hardee, and some affairs with our cavalry, was moving east from Fayetteville towards Goldsboro. The confederate cavalry was bivouacked about two miles south of Bentonville where the road from Smithfield intersected that from Fayetteville to Goldsboro."

It was this point that General Johnston selected as suitable for a crushing blow upon the detached divisions of the fourteenth corps. That night, March 18th, General Johnston reached Bentonville with a part of his force and next morning, the 19th, while General Sherman was riding off to join Howard far away to the south, General Hardee was marching on to the field with his troops. General Bragg, who commanded Hoke's division, had already formed them across the road on which Carlin's division was moving. The Army of the Tennessee under Loring was on the right. One division of Hardee's went still to Loring's right, and the other to the support of Bragg. This main line was heavily intrenched. Hampton with his cavalry was formed some distance in front of Bragg's line and across the road. Such was the situation on both sides, on the morning of the 19th of March, 1865.

The same old enemy, commanded by the same old generals, which the fourteenth corps had so often confronted and defeated in the far west, had again the courage to stand in this last ditch, in the far east, as a forlorn hope for a wretched cause already lost. For Bragg commanded the Confederate

forces at Perryville, Ky., in the battle of the 8th of October, 1862, in which my regiment and nearly all the troops which afterwards formed the fourteenth corps, were engaged. He retreated from the field at Perryville, closely followed by the Army of the Cumberland and kept on retreating south, with a stand at Stone River and Chickamauga (but eventually always moving backward) until in his final flight over the heights of Missionary Ridge he disappeared from sight and was succeeded by General Joseph E. Johnston who now commanded him on the field of Bentonville. So Johnston had retreated before the Army of Sherman in the Atlanta Campaign, from Buzzard's Roost to Atlanta, where he disappeared and was succeeded by Hood. When Sherman turned his back upon burning Atlanta, with his face towards the rising sun, he occasionally encountered Wade Hampton and his cavalry, but always on the retreat. These retreating and defeated soldiers here in this out-of-the-way spot, stood together on this bright spring morning to make one more, and a final thrust at their old and unsuspecting and always victorious enemy—a thrust that hurt, but it was their last, and they paid dearly for their temerity.

Hobart's brigade of the first division of the fourteenth corps, with a heavy skirmish line to the front, had the advance. It was composed of six regiments—the Twenty-first Wisconsin, One Hundred and Fourth Illinois, Forty-second and Eighty-eighth Indiana, Thirty-third and Ninety-fourth Ohio. Unofficially, this brigade, all through the campaign on the march to the sea, and in the Carolinas, had been divided into two wings. It is plain why Sher-

man's army moved so rapidly always. It had so many wings. It had enough wings to fly through the air, if the foraging had been as good up there as it was on the earth.

By virtue of my rank, I had been assigned to the command of the left wing, composed of the Twenty-first Wisconsin—which was my own regiment—the Forty-second Indiana, and the One Hundred and Fourth Illinois. The three other regiments formed the right wing, and was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Briant of the Eighty-eighth Indiana. The latter had the advance and soon struck Hampton's cavalry. After driving them some distance, the resistance became greater, and the right wing was deployed in line of battle with the left wing in line behind it. We advanced in this order for some distance through the woods, when I received an order to halt, and the right wing moved on across the road, and the brigade commander with them. This proved to be the last time I saw the right wing or the brigade commander for that day. We stood here in the thick undergrowth of the woods but a few minutes listening to the shots in front, when the division commander, General Carlin, ordered us to move rapidly to the front, by the right of companies for about a mile, where we went into line of battle, and threw forward a heavy line of skirmishers. These latter pushed up against a line of Confederate intrenchments. A section of the First Illinois and one of the Nineteenth Indiana batteries, in all four guns, were placed on the road immediately to my left, and I was told that beyond that extended to the left the second or Buell's brigade of our division, making a continuous line at right

angles with the road. We were then facing Hoke's division, and two batteries of artillery intrenched. This road ran on the crest of a slight ridge. From our position on the right slope of this ridge, we could see only a part of the battery, and nothing beyond it.

CHAPTER XX

BENTONVILLE

The position at the battle-field—The left wing of the first brigade under command of the author—Its isolated line in the battle—The irresistible advance of the enemy at right angles with the Union line—The wing falls back to the line of the second division (General J. D. Morgan's) and forms on its left—The loss of the wing in this battle—Criticism of the tactics of the first division—What Sherman and Kilpatrick said of the battle—The author's official report of the battle.

AN attack being threatened upon the right of my position, the One Hundred and Fourth Illinois was sent there and in taking position on the right of the Forty-second Indiana, ran into the enemy. This made that the point of danger, and I, therefore, gave my chief attention in that direction. The commander of the left company of the Twenty-first Wisconsin was next to the battery on the road. He said that occasionally a staff officer of either General Davis' or General Slocum's would ride up the road, stop at the line, look wisely towards the front, and say, "What regiment is this?" "The Twenty-first Wisconsin." "Why don't you move on, there is nothing but cavalry there." But just then, an artillery shot or a few minnie balls would whistle about his horse, and he would go to the rear. The firing was constant on the skirmish line. The wounded were being brought back; the skirmishers were reinforced and occasionally driven in. My orders were to hold the

line and push the skirmishers as far to the front as possible. I could see no Union troops on my right, though the third brigade (Colonel Miles) had been sent in that direction. There was only a swamp to be seen. In front were heavy black-jack woods. My right was refused. The artillery battle between the batteries was terrific. I noticed that several battery horses were killed, yet it did not occur to me that we needed reinforcements, or that there was more than a heavy line of dismounted cavalry and a battery in our front. We were constantly losing men by wounds and inflicting great punishment on the enemy when he appeared. Thus the afternoon wore away.

About four o'clock, P. M., the skirmishers were driven in again and it was reported to me by the artillerists and the officers of the left company of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, that our troops on the left of the road were all gone, and the enemy in large numbers were passing to our left rear. I hastened to the left of our line. The artillerists were gone to the rear, and had abandoned one piece, which looked very lonely. Approaching our flank, at a distance of perhaps two hundred paces, was a line of Loring's and Hoke's divisions, parallel with the road and at right angles with our line. It stretched to our rear farther than I could see through the timber. I could not help admiring for the moment, their fine soldierly bearing, for they had just swept away from that part of the field, the right wing of ours, and the whole of Buell's brigade, together with the division commander, and our brigade commander, also Robinson's brigade from the twentieth corps, which had been thrown

in to fill a gap between the battery and Hobart's right wing, after Hobart had moved to the left away from the road, all of which had occurred without my knowledge. I supposed that I would be informed of any change in the line to the left of the battery. The rebel army were feeling triumphant. I glanced back along the road to see if there were any more of our corps in sight, but there were none, and none so far as I could see on our right. It was evident at once that we could not remain an instant in the isolated position we were, —three little regiments had no show whatever against the forces in sight—or we would have the same fate that had overtaken the left. We would be either captured or annihilated. At first, determining that I would not retreat, if anything else could be done, I ordered some of the infantry to handle the abandoned piece as if preparing to fire, and deployed the left company of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, facing the enemy, and sent them forward. These movements served to check the enemy's advance slightly, until our line could change front, so as to be parallel with them. While this order was being executed, I perceived that the firing on our old front still continued, and in the new position would enfilade our line. I then ordered a retreat which was executed in fine order across the swamp, parallel to our first position, and to the right of it. When we reached the farther edge of the swamp, what was our surprise to find the front line of the second division (General Morgan's) of the fourteenth corps behind a breastwork of logs. We formed on the left; the Twenty-first Wisconsin on the right, the Forty-second Indiana in the centre, and

One Hundred and Fourth Illinois on the left and commenced to make a breastwork of old fallen timber. No time was lost, but very little was done before the enemy was on us with that triumphant line which we had just admired. Here the firing was terrific, and on our part very effective, as I saw the next day in riding over the field. The official report of General Slocum says that the heaviest fighting of the battle was in front of this part of Morgan's line. I thought the Confederate dead on the battle-fields of Perryville and Stone River, whom I saw, were numerous, but they were not equal in number to those in front of this position. We lost many men, but the protection of the logs saved us from great slaughter. The enemy still outflanked us and began gradually to close around our left. Our ammunition soon became exhausted, not having been replenished during the day. Major Widmer, commanding the One Hundred and Fourth Illinois, seeing this, and fearing capture, ordered the regiment for the second time to the rear. This was a mistake, for at this very time, General Jeff C. Davis was bringing Morgan's reserve brigade (General Fearing's) in on our left, and Cogswell's brigade of the twentieth corps, was also moving in that direction, but these movements could not be seen by our troops, nor were they in time to prevent the enemy gaining our rear and firing into our backs. Major Widmer's movement carried the other two regiments with it, but they were all veterans and soon rallied upon a new line from which skirmishers were immediately deployed and the line advanced to the second position again. Here we remained until after dark.

In the meantime the enemy had been repulsed by fresh troops thrown in on our flank, and darkness coming on, this eventful day's fighting came to an end. Our loss was fifty-four in the wing, out of six hundred in line.

Now, a word as to the cause of our isolation and imminent capture. It seems that about one o'clock, General Carlin, desiring to make a movement on the enemy's right flank, took Buell's brigade and Hobart's right wing, accompanied by General Hobart, out of line and away from any connection with the battery on the road, without informing me of it. This force made a wide detour but struck Loring's division and the right of Hoke's in earthworks, were repulsed, and then countercharged with the result as stated. General Carlin, in a paper upon this battle, read before the Ohio Commandery of the Loyal Legion, mistakenly refers to Hobart's brigade as a unit throughout this battle. His official report states the truth that the two wings were separately manœuvred, and that my wing seemed to do as stated in his report "what was best under the circumstances."

During the night of the 19th, the enemy fell back some distance in our front and on that part of the line there was no more fighting. Hazen's division came up next day on the extreme right of our army wing, and during the 20th and 21st, a large part of the whole army. There was some fighting but the enemy finally retreated from the field, as they had always done before except, perhaps, at Chickamauga.

Bentonville was one of the fights in which they lost more than we did—their loss was, according to General Johnston,

2,343—ours, according to General Sherman, 1,604—three-fourths of which occurred the first day.

The first day's fighting was a complete surprise to our generals and the first division, fourteenth corps, being in the advance, was the sacrifice. It was not properly formed for fighting so large a force of the enemy. It was sent in by detachments, and at no time during the 19th did it have a compact front, nor a properly fortified line. It was without reserves. Of course, under these circumstances, when it was attacked by 14,000 confederates, under so able a commander as General J. E. Johnston, and such veteran subordinates, it could not hold its position. When our army did arrive on the 21st, it was easy to hold the field, and the foe could have been crushed. General Sherman says in his "Memoirs," volume 2, page 306, "With the knowledge now possessed of his small force, of course, I committed an error in not overwhelming Johnston's army on the 21st of March, 1865." So the whole battle was a tragedy of errors, beginning when Sherman rode away on the 19th, and ending when the enemy escaped on the 21st.

On March 19th, the day of the battle, General J. Kilpatrick, commanding our cavalry, wrote General Sherman as follows: "During yesterday afternoon and last evening he" (the enemy) "made forced marches, and is now in our front and General Johnston is in command. He addressed his troops this morning saying that he had 40,000 men, and that our army must, and should be stopped here. The fighting to-day has been splendid and you can rely on your army in everything. I never witnessed more determined

attacks than were made by the enemy to-day upon our centre. Six were made, one after another, in rapid succession on the same men, at the same point. . . . If you attack the enemy in the flank and rear, as you propose in your communication to me, Johnston's army, if it remains, is lost. Generals Slocum, Davis, Williams, and others, for several hours to-day anxiously listened, and only waited for the first sound of battle from the Army of the Tennessee, when they would have marched without halting over every opposition in front. I only hope to God that Johnston may remain for your attack, and you will achieve a triumph over the enemy such as no general can boast. You can expect everything that is brave and daring from my cavalry. . . ." (See page 909, serial volume 99, "Rebellion Record.")

Before Kilpatrick had written this letter, General Sherman had written him as follows, "If that force remain in Slocum's front, to-morrow, I will move straight on its rear." But it remained there, until the night of the 21st. General Sherman missed his opportunity, as he said in the quotation from his "Memoirs" heretofore given.

My official report of this battle is published in part 1, page 463, volume 47, "Official Record, War of Rebellion," and is as follows :

*"In Camp Near Goldsboro,
"March 24, 1865.*

"CAPT. J. W. FORD,
A. A. A. G.,
1st Brig., 1st Div., 14th A. C.

"CAPTAIN: I have the honor to make the following report of the operations of the left wing of this brigade, to wit ;

The Twenty-first Wisconsin Infantry, Major Walker commanding, One Hundred and Fourth Illinois Infantry, Major Widmer, and Forty-second Indiana Infantry Major Kellams, in the engagement of the 19th inst.,—that being the only period during the campaign, just closed, that this wing operated beyond the immediate supervision of the brigade commander. This wing moved from camp at seven o'clock, A. M., on March 19th, and went into line of battle at 10 A. M. on our right of the road, twenty-two miles west of Goldsboro, N. C., as the second line of the brigade. The first line immediately attacked the enemy, and drove him very rapidly, this line following all the movements, but in compliance with an order sent me by the brigade commander, the wing halted. Very shortly, but after the first line of the brigade had advanced out of sight through the woods and thick undergrowth, I received the order from the brigade commander to advance by right of companies to the front. The wing advanced thus, about a mile, when by order of the division commander, Brigadier-General Carlin, the wing took position to the right of the right wing of the brigade, with the left resting upon the main road, relieving the Ninety-fourth Ohio Infantry, Major Snider. The positions of the regiments then were as follows: Forty-second Indiana on the right and refused, Twenty-first Wisconsin in the centre, and One Hundred and Fourth Illinois on the left, the last two at right angles with the road. An attack being threatened by the enemy on our right flank, Brigadier-General Carlin ordered the left regiment, One Hundred and Fourth Illinois there. It took position immediately on the right of the Forty-second Indiana, running almost into the face of the enemy in taking position. The line thus formed at once fortified as well as it could under a constant fire from the enemy, which our skirmish line was unable to silence. By order of Brigadier-General Carlin, I reinforced the skirmish line and advanced it until a line of the enemy's works was developed, when it was halted. The right being closest to the enemy, and the firing there being heaviest, I considered that the point of most danger, and therefore gave the left less attention. Besides, two pieces of artillery were on my immediate left, and I supposed the other wing of the brigade on the immediate left of the artillery, there being

only an open field in that front. About 4 P. M., my skirmishers were driven in, and it was reported to me by the artillerists that the enemy had passed in some numbers into the woods on my left rear, and at the same time the artillerists on my left went to the rear, abandoning one piece. I at once ran to the left and saw a line of battle of the enemy approaching within 200 paces of my position at right angles with it and extending far to my left rear. The left company, Captain Randall of the Twenty-first Wisconsin, immediately deployed in that direction, and so much of the regiment as could see the enemy's line opened fire upon it. In the meantime I gave command for the wing to change front in that direction, but as the enemy had already opened fire upon our rear, and perceiving that if the movement should succeed, we should have a swamp at our rear, and also be again outflanked, just as the movements I had just ordered began, I ordered a retreat, which the wing executed in good order through the swamp, upon the opposite edge of which it again took position, about 200 paces in the right rear of the former position, at about right angles with it, and forming a continuation of the first line of the second division, fourteenth army corps. The Twenty-first Wisconsin was on the right, Forty-second Indiana in the centre and One Hundred and Fourth Illinois on the left and refused. Within ten minutes from time of taking this position, the enemy again attacked us furiously on the front and left flank. The wing fought here gallantly until its ammunition was exhausted, when Major Widmer commanding the One Hundred and Fourth Illinois Infantry on the left, finding he was outflanked, and the enemy about to gain his rear, again fell back. This movement carried with it the whole wing, but with the aid of the three regimental commanders, I succeeded in keeping the men together and again within 300 paces of the second position, formed a new line, this time with our backs to the swamp, and threw forward a line of skirmishers. Finding the enemy did not attack us here, I took the offensive, advanced the wing near the second position, and found the enemy had been checked and driven by a portion of the second division of the corps, and some fresh troops thrown in on our left. Here I reported in person to Brigadier-General Morgan, commanding second division,

fourteenth army corps, and sent E Company, Captain Borchardt, Twenty-first Wisconsin, to procure ammunition, and report our condition and location to Brevet Brigadier-General Hobart, commanding brigade. About 9 P. M., by order of the brigade commander, the wing joined the division about one and one-half miles distant. The wing went into the fight with thirty-two officers and six hundred and ten muskets. The loss is as follows: In officers, three killed, one wounded; in enlisted men, four killed, forty-one wounded, and five captured. Total loss, fifty-four.

“For further particulars, I respectfully refer to Regimental Reports, which will be forwarded directly to brigade headquarters.

“M. H. FITCH,
“Lieutenant-Colonel commanding.”

It can readily be seen by a careful reading of the official reports and of the unofficial articles that have been written upon this battle by those who were in it, that Carlin's division was maneuvered and formed to attack a light line of cavalry. It was at no time, down to the moment of attack by the rebel forces, in a position to resist such an attack. It was drawn out in single line, the brigades detached from each other, and with no connection with any other troops on either the right or the left. Our brigade was divided and the right wing marched off without my being informed of it. No instructions were given me except to remain where I was. I was not informed that General James D. Morgan had placed his division on the right. He had formed and with military sagacity, fortified, with one brigade in reserve, but made no connection with us. His fortified, compact line saved his division. Nor, did I know where Colonel Miles' brigade was. The result was that when General Carlin was cut off from us, I was compelled to act as if I were there

entirely alone, and was greatly surprised, but delighted to fall back on General Morgan's lines. The problem was how not to be captured, for it was impossible to stand against the overwhelming number of rebel troops plainly visible, coming against us.

The following letter from General Carlin, written after the battle, and after he had left the division explains itself :

"Cumberland, Maryland, May 27, 1865.

"LIEUTENANT-COLONEL M. H. FITCH,

"21st Wisconsin Vet. Volunteers.

"DEAR COLONEL :

"Ever since leaving the first division, fourteenth corps, I have longed to communicate with the officers and men, and especially of the first brigade, for the purpose of expressing my appreciation of their conduct on all occasions, where courage, fortitude and self-denial were required. Though disappointed at times at not meeting with perfect success, subsequent reflection has convinced me that all was accomplished by them that could have been expected or desired. More especially at the battle of Bentonville where we were forced to fall back, have I now reason to congratulate myself and them on their behavior. Had my troops on the left of the road held their position longer than they did, they would have been surrounded and crushed by superior numbers.

"With sincere wishes for your success and happiness, and that of my old brigade, I am,

"Truly your friend,

"W. P. CARLIN,

"Brev. Maj. Gen."

I blame no one, because all the commanders, Sherman, Slocum, Davis and Carlin, were all in the dark. They had no idea what was in front of them, and made no previous disposition to meet such a force. The breastworks of Morgan saved his division, and only part of it gave way and fell

back. General Joseph E. Johnston, in his official report, boasts of the number of lines of works he found abandoned during the assault. But they were those of little detachments taken from one division and scattered here and there on the field, around which his long lines could wind on both flanks.

CHAPTER XXI

FROM BENTONVILLE TO MILWAUKEE

In camp at Goldsboro—The colored people our only friends in the long march just closed—The cruelties of slavery—The maxims of scripture as well as the laws of nature alike, eventually establish justice—April 10th, marched towards Raleigh, North Carolina—April 12th, the surrender of Lee to Grant was announced to Sherman's army while on the march—Entered Raleigh, April 13th—The assassination of Mr. Lincoln cast the army into the depths of grief—The regiment stationed at Avent's Ferry on Cape Fear River, thirty miles from Raleigh—Johnston's army finally surrendered on April 28th—The march to Washington, D. C.—The Grand Review, May 24th—Final muster-out—Payment and discharge at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 17, 1865.

MARCH 22d, after leaving the battle-field of Bentonville, we marched through the fifteenth and seventeenth corps. On the 23d, passed General Terry's headquarters at Cox's Bridge. He had brought his command up from Wilmington. As we passed through Goldsboro, we marched company front past Sherman, Schofield, Slocum and Davis. They were standing on the sidewalk.

At Goldsboro, March 27th, I wrote, "That part of the history of the campaign just closed, that historians will write will be tame enough. The facts that will remain unwritten will furnish romancers and poets with material for the next thousand years. The slaves have been our only friends. What they have done for the army entitles them to their freedom, or whatever they may desire. Their mute countenances in South Carolina were the best arguments in favor of abolition. If this war is a great drama, the slave in the

scene has been the star actor, and has acted his part well. The volunteer army so far as I know, are all abolitionists. Men, whom the arguments of Phillips, Sumner, and Beecher hardened into pro-slavery advocates, by the simple protestations and silent evidences of the cruelty of slavery of the poor demented negroes, have been made practical abolitionists. How true did Paul say to the Corinthians, 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and base things of the world and things which are despised; and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are.' Herbert Spencer would express this a little differently. Perhaps he would say, 'Evolution by which the moral world as well as the physical is governed, destroys the unfit, and selects the fit to survive, and man does not know what is fit,' which means the same thing. He who makes it a business to deprive any human being of the profits of his labor is unfit.

"The slaves have furnished us with information of the movements of the enemy, of the roads, of the treatment accorded our men as prisoners. They furnished our men food, shelter and clothing, and piloted escaped prisoners to our lines, all at the risk of their lives.

"No pen will write all the incidents of the past campaign unless the 'bummers' should fill the world with books, beside which the 'Arabian Nights' and 'Robinson Crusoe' would seem dull."

At Goldsboro, General Carlin procured leave of absence and went north. He did not again join us. General George P. Buell, who commanded the second brigade, assumed command of the division by virtue of seniority. I was assigned to command Buell's brigade. This lasted only a few days. General C. C. Walcutt, a little while before the next advance, was assigned to Carlin's place, and Buell went back to his brigade and I returned to my left wing.

Started on new campaign April 10th, towards Raleigh. On April 11th, I requested Colonel Hobart to relieve me of

command of the left wing of the brigade. It was an anomalous command, not recognized by the regulations and took me away from a legitimate position. A demi-brigade commander was recognized by no one but the brigade commander. The command of a regiment was much pleasanter and more honorable.

April 12th, while halted in the midst of a swamp, a staff officer rode along the line announcing that General Sherman had received a dispatch from Secretary Stanton that Lee had surrendered to General Grant on the 9th. Those woods perhaps never before resounded with such cheers as our whole army gave upon receiving this news—it foreshadowed the end—and home.

April 13th, entered Raleigh at 9:30 A. M., close behind Kilpatrick's cavalry. We marched straight for the capitol in open column of companies, bands playing, colors flying. We rested on the capitol grounds and hoisted our regimental flag on its dome. As we entered the city, first Slocum and staff, then Davis and staff, then Sherman passed us. They stood at the gate of the grounds of the state house, as we marched into the capitol grounds. The citizens generally remained in the city. Governor Vance and staff had departed. We received the news of Lee's surrender with joy, but Mr. Lincoln's death cast us into the depths of grief.

We left Raleigh April 14th, staying there but one day. Orders came to march and encamp the division within three miles of the Cape Fear River, but my regiment went on to Avent's Ferry to guard the crossing. This is thirty miles southwest of Raleigh. We remained here in camp for some

days, while Sherman was negotiating with Johnston for surrender. The squires and farmers for miles around came to my headquarters to ask for guards to protect their families. They asked me in some instances to talk to their darkies concerning their duties towards their former masters; and in one instance a horse was turned over from one neighbor to another, by my order. They liked to be governed and evidently were used to it. They were very ignorant and had been easily governed by a few sharpers. In the nature of things everywhere, the strong govern the weak, and it was the case here in North Carolina, and all through the south in a marked degree. There was a notable absence of schoolhouses and weekly newspapers all along our march. The rampant secessionists must have had wonderful power over these people. Whoever was in power would control their thoughts. Rebel soldiers absent from their commands were constantly coming to get paroled. Lee's soldiers lined the road on the way to their homes. They were all paroled. We also had battalion drill and dress parade daily.

On the 28th, General Joseph E. Johnston having finally surrendered at Durham, we started for Richmond via Oxford—a beautiful little town just south of the Virginia line. We left Raleigh to our right, and entered Virginia at the Roanoke River, May 2d, just one year, lacking two days, from the date of crossing the state line from Tennessee into Georgia, in the march from Lookout Mountain at Chattanooga. What a year that had been in the history of the war and of the Twenty-first Wisconsin!

At Avent's Ferry, after receiving the order from the division commander, General Walcutt, that I should join the division next day, a very amusing incident occurred. In order not to delay the movement to a late hour next morning, I sent one-half of the regiment across the river that evening by the ferry, with instructions to Captain La Count, the senior officer, to move that half a short distance out from the river, go into camp, and await my arrival with the other companies the next morning. The next morning, while I was making my toilet a messenger came from La Count saying that all night he had heard firing in front of him. That then he was in line of battle expecting an attack, and asked me to hurry up with the remaining companies. Knowing that there could be no attack by the enemy, I sent the messenger back with that information, and that there must be some mistake. The captain had been alarmed by the *feu de joie* of Morgan's and Walcutt's divisions over the surrender of Johnston and the close of the war. I could not hear the firing from my headquarters, but I learned afterwards that it was terrific. The division started on the homeward march early in the morning, so that I did not catch up with it until night. But along the road during the day, I would occasionally receive a note from either Hobart or Walcutt in front, jocularly asking me to report my losses in the morning's engagement with the enemy, or if I was still in line of battle, awaiting the enemy. Hobart and Walcutt were very jolly, genial men. They could not let an opportunity of that kind pass without getting some fun out of it. Walcutt was a young man, but

Hobart was then fifty years old, but as young in spirits as Walcutt.

All along the march through the beautiful country tributary to the Roanoke River, the darkies were very demonstrative, rejoicing over their freedom. General Thomas was born in Southampton County, Virginia, the second county east of Mecklenburg, where we marched in crossing the line.

May 6th, we crossed the Appomattox, and next day encamped opposite Richmond, on the south side of the James River. We had marched 180 miles, from Avent's Ferry the men carrying knapsacks, muskets, cartridge boxes, and haversacks, in six days.

It is scarcely possible that any description of Richmond or of Libby Prison as they then appeared would be interesting to the reader. They have been described in numerous books and hundreds of published articles.

Our route from Richmond to Washington took us between the North Anna River and Spottsylvania, across the Rapidan, by the Raccoon Ford, leaving the battle-field of the Wilderness to our right ; thence by Catletts and Centerville to Alexandria, where we went into camp, on the 19th of May.

Our brigade was the last one in the column that passed by company front before the President, General Grant, and others on May 24th, 1865, in what is called the "Grand Review." It has become more or less familiar to every reader, as the culmination of the closing scenes of the war. It was with considerable pride that our regiment received

the plaudits of the crowd at our fine line, and the way the men handled their arms. There was a halt of the column opposite the Treasury Department on Fifteenth Street, where I deemed it best to have the men rest a short time. They were carrying their arms at right shoulder shift. They brought them to shoulder arms, and then I gave the command, "Order Arms." They had never done it any better. When the butts of the muskets touched the pavement, it sounded as if a single musket only, had been brought down, so simultaneous was the combined movement. The immense throng clapped their hands and cheered. A few friends of mine who stood together on the sidewalk at another point on the march gave me three cheers, that were greatly appreciated. The day was especially fine for the review, but it lasted six hours and a-half, and our being in the rear of the column, made it very tiresome. General Sherman says of this review in his "Memoirs," "When I reached the Treasury Building, and looked back, the sight was simply magnificent. The column was compact and the glittering muskets looked like a solid mass of steel, moving with the regularity of a pendulum."

The immense concourse of people lining the sidewalks and occupying every available spot of the buildings where the feet could find a rest, seemed perfectly fascinated. They lingered even after the troops had disappeared, as if hypnotized by the pomp and circumstance, instinctively knowing that their eyes would never again behold a sight like that. Every space seemed covered with flags, which were also festooned across the avenue in innumerable places.

After the review, we moved our camp to the Washington side of the Potomac, two-and-a-half miles west of the capitol, near the soldier's home. I made a pleasant visit while lying at Washington, to the camp of the old Sixth Wisconsin. That and the Second Wisconsin had been so reduced some time previous that they were consolidated. There were but five or six of old Company B left. All the other members of the company then present were strangers to me, either later recruits or drafted men. These five or six came to the captain's quarters. I had a pleasant talk with them. Henry E. Smyzer was captain. He was a corporal when I left the company. I have never seen him since.

We were to be mustered out of service as soon as the rolls and discharges could be prepared. It was a long and a tedious task. The recruits who had come to us at Look-out Mountain and the transfers from the First and Tenth Wisconsin Infantry regiments, those that were left of them, had to be transferred to the Third Wisconsin Infantry. There were three hundred of them. June 5th, I wrote,

"I have been sitting in my tent all evening performing little pleasing tasks, such as mentioning our color corporal in orders, because there is no vacancy for his promotion, which he so bravely earned in the South Carolina campaign and Bentonville, also recommending some officer for something. There is some little thing to be done almost every minute, and when it is in favor of some brave, quiet, modest, intelligent soldier who will at this late hour in the history of the regiment, thus perceive that his merits have not been overlooked, my heart swells with pleasure, until I forget the turmoil and dull routine of the day's work. Yesterday we turned out to greet our old commander, Gen-

eral George H. Thomas. The air vibrated with cheer after cheer that we gave the grand, true soldier. Our regiment was on the right of the division. As this 'Rock of Chickamauga' took my hand and shook it with an honest grip, he asked if I had been well, etc. Ex-Governor Randall addressed all the Wisconsin troops in the Army of Georgia, as our army is called, and then there was more cheering. It is nothing but one continual excitement here, and I am anxious for peace and quiet."

Our discharges were all dated on June 8, 1865, but we still remained in the United States service until arriving at Milwaukee, Wis., where we went by rail from Washington. A paymaster there paid each man what was due him on June 17th, endorsed the payment and date on his discharge, and handed the money and the discharge to him. Then we were out, and citizens once more, after a service of two years, nine months and twelve days. My own service extended from May 10, 1861, to June 17, 1865—four years, one month and seven days, or counting it from the date of muster into the United States' service, July 16, 1861, it was forty-seven months. The only regret I am conscious of, is that I did not have the ability and knowledge to do better in every emergency than I did. In each soldierly duty, I did that which I thought at the time was best.

The following was the roster of the officers at the date of muster-out :

H. C. Hobart, colonel and brevet brigadier-general.

M. H. Fitch, lieutenant-colonel and brevet colonel commanding.

C. H. Walker, major.

B. F. Fuller, adjutant.

S. H. Fernandez, quartermaster.

James T. Reeve, surgeon.

Henry L. Barnes, assistant surgeon.

William M. Hoyt, assistant surgeon.

Reverend O. P. Clinton, chaplain.

Company A—H. K. Edwards, captain; W. H. Cook, first lieutenant; Samuel Hotaling, second lieutenant.

Company B—James E. Stuart, captain; Edward Vredenburg, first lieutenant.

Company C—William Hubbard, second lieutenant.

Company D—J. H. Otto, captain; Lyman Waite, first lieutenant.

Company E—Fred W. Borchardt, captain; C. F. Weston, first lieutenant; August Hanson, second lieutenant.

Company F—Edward Dorian, first lieutenant; A. S. Delaware, second lieutenant.

Company G—William Watson, captain; D. D. Burnham, first lieutenant.

Company H—C. H. Morgan, captain.

Company I—A. B. Bradish, captain; C. B. Clark, first lieutenant; Gustavus Jaeger, second lieutenant.

Company K—Joseph La Count, captain; John E. Davies, first lieutenant.

In comparing this with the roster of officers who were present in Oshkosh, September 5, 1862, at the muster-in, there are eight only, who were present at both muster-in and muster-out, viz. :—M. H. Fitch, C. H. Walker, Dr. J. T. Reeve, Rev. O. P. Clinton, H. K. Edwards, F. W. Borchardt, C. H. Morgan, and Joseph La Count.

Colonel Hobart was not present at Oshkosh; assistant surgeons Hoyt and Barnes joined late in the war. The rest of the officers on the roster at muster-out had been promoted from the ranks for bravery and meritorious services and I believe all of them had served from the muster-in to the muster-out.

CHAPTER XXII

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The standard of efficiency in a regiment or an army—It seems to be large losses—A better test is the punishment given the enemy—Some figures given by Colonel Fox in "Regimental Losses"—Comparatively few fighting regiments or soldiers—The standing of the Twenty-first Wisconsin compared with other regiments—Some compliments from corps and division commanders as to the efficiency of the Twenty-first Wisconsin.

It is difficult to set up a standard of the real efficiency of a body of troops, or the real greatness of a battle. The reporters and song writers can seize upon a romantic affair like the "battle above the clouds," the "march to the sea," or the "charge of the light brigade" at Balaklava in the Crimean War, and make the whole world talk and think about it. The loss in killed and wounded in the first two of these, however, was utterly insignificant; although, had it not been for the clouds, which have been immortalized in poetry, that hung between the rebels above and our men below, on Lookout Mountain, Hooker's loss would have been very severe. Lord Cardigan's loss in the famous charge at Balaklava was large, but this was far exceeded in single battles by several infantry regiments on both sides, in our war—not only in number, but in the ratio of loss to the aggregate number engaged.

The percentage of loss in the charge of the Light Brigade, was 36.7. Longstreet's wing at Chickamauga on the second

day, lost forty-four per cent. General Joseph Wheeler says that the loss on each side at Shiloh, amounted to about thirty per cent. He says, "At Perryville, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Gettysburg, Missionary Ridge, the Wilderness, and Spottsylvania, the loss frequently reached, and sometimes exceeded forty per cent., and the average in killed and wounded on one side or the other, was over thirty per cent."

But I think this large loss, when it comes to be analyzed, is not a matter to boast of, except as showing the bravery of the rank and file. The boast of Napoleon Bonaparte was that he could accomplish the objects of war at small loss.

However, I suppose that a popular test of efficiency, and perhaps as true a one as is possible to establish, in most cases, is that of loss in killed and wounded. If a regiment will stand under fire until it loses a large per cent. of its numbers—not in missing, but in killed and wounded—that is the best test of its bravery. Yet we must remember that at the world-renowned engagement, the siege of Fort Sumpter, not a man was lost on our side; that while the battles in which the killed and wounded were in greatest numbers, will stand at the head of the list, sometimes the most important results, like the capture of New Orleans and the opening of the Mississippi River, have been achieved with small flow of human blood. Many brave regiments had few losses, some from what may be called good luck in not coming under severe fire, and others from the skilful management of their officers in battle. But I notice that when a writer at this late day refers to the war, he points out as

particularly worthy of glory, those regiments whose losses were greatest as shown by the army records.

The same test applies to battles. Gettysburg stands on the Union side, especially, at the head in our late war on account of great losses. The next four in their order are the Wilderness, Cold Harbor (which General Grant said was unnecessary), Antietam (where McClellan outnumbered the enemy, two to one) and Chancellorsville. These were all by the Army of the Potomac. Now comes one of our own, Chickamauga, which by this standard, is far ahead of any other fought in the west. Statistics are inexorable, and brush away many a popular error. Fredericksburg—Burnside's battle—what a slaughter was there! The whole country held up its hands in horror. Yet, in killed and wounded, it did not equal Chickamauga.

The Twenty-first regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers was in thirteen general engagements, in each of which the killed and wounded on the Union side, exceeded 500. Gauged by this test, they rank as follows:

KILLED AND WOUNDED

| | |
|--|--------|
| Chickamauga | 10,900 |
| Stone River | 8,788 |
| Kenesaw Mountain, June 9th to June 30th, | 7,870 |
| Chattanooga, including Orchard Knob, Lookout Mountain and Mission- ary Ridge | 5,296 |
| Perryville | 3,859 |
| Resacca | 2,747 |
| Dallas, May 25th to June 4th | 2,400 |
| Peach Tree Creek | 1,710 |
| Bentonville , | 1,359 |